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**PARENTAL ATTITUDES
AND
THEIR EFFECT ON THE
INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL
IN
GIFTED STUDENTS**

**A Research Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of**

MASTER OF EDUCATION

to the faculty of the department of

**EDUCATION
at
LYNN UNIVERSITY**

Boca Raton, Florida

by

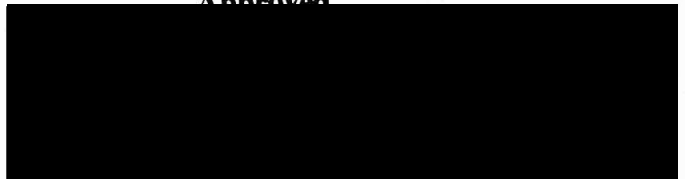
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Submitted

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Approved



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CHAPTER 1

* INTRODUCTION *

Intelligence is an intrinsic endowment linked by processes such as learning, investigating, classifying, applying language, and adapting to new situations. Often possibilities for superior intelligence are innate. Nonetheless, the child's environment is the key to establishing to what degree it is formulated, (Concise Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 1994). A child's gift of intelligence is a gift to the child and to the family. According to Desmond Tutu, "You don't choose your family, they are God's gift to you as you are to them," (Simpsons, Contemporary Quotations, 1988).

For decades, educators have focused their attention on finding the explanations why some students succeed while others fail (Crandall, Katkovsky, & Crandall, 1965; Rotter, 1966; Gowan, 1955; Whitmore, 1980; Dowdell & Colangelo, 1982). Numerous studies have investigated the correlation between variables such as: age, gender, IQ, and socioeconomic status. Since educators have begun to view children as individuals, there has been increased attention on personality traits and their interaction with academic success.

One variable that has been explored is **Locus of Control**. The concept of locus of control is derived from a social-learning theory stating that locus of control is generated from past experience and is controlled by "laws of learning,"

(Mead-Fox, Merrill & Kralj, 1985, p.1). According to Rotter (1966), locus of control is: "The degree to which individuals believe that reinforcements are contingent upon their own behavior." In addition, it is important to note that "self-concept and locus of control might be related to the motivation necessary for academic achievement and realization of intellectual potential (Yong, 1992, p.194).

For several decades researchers have studied locus of control and its relationship to how skillfully children function and achieve within both academic and non-academic environments. However, researchers must understand that, locus of control cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be considered an integral part of many factors. According to some developmental psychologists, babies are born with a predilection to acquire certain natures, "differing among themselves on many variables such as activity level, sensitivity to change in their environment, reactivity and mood " (Kerr, 1990, p.11). Perfectionism, is "the **ability** to perform perfectly combines with the **need** perfectly," (Kerr, 1990. p.11). Past studies have found a positive correlation between chronological age and mental age, (Lefcourt, 1982, p.151). Therefore, when discussing internal locus of control we must also address the relationship between IQ and locus of control.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and evaluate the relationship of parental attitudes and their effects on the internal locus of control among gifted boys in grades 2, 3, and 4. Many of the past studies have focused on age and sex and have omitted the variable of parental influence (Crandall, et. al, 1965); (Nowicki & Strickland, (1973).

A parent's influence:

... begins at birth and continues throughout a child's maturation. As the child grows, more influences and variables enter into the child's scope of existence. Within this circle are, teachers, peers, and siblings. At different stages in a child's life, the importance of these influences will vary. A key factor determining child's locus of control hinges upon "parental feelings of efficacy" (Swick & Graves, 1986).

Past research has viewed gifted students as perfectionists who experience frustration and proclivity towards placing unnecessary pressure on themselves to achieve. Past researchers such as Hollingworth (1926); Whitmore (1980); and Roedell (1987) contend that this is true. According to Kerr (1990):

Perfectionism is defined here as a complex of characteristics and behaviors, including compulsiveness with regard to work habits, over-concern for details, unrealistically high standards for self and others, indiscriminate acquiescence to external evaluation, and rigid routines (p.7).

Kerr related that although there has been belief that the child who sought perfection must come from an environment of "pushy exacting parents," some researchers have realized that often they are progeny of easy-going parents with quite realistic expectations," (Kerr, 1990, p.7). Furthermore:

Individuals develop and refine their control ideology through numerous experiences they have over the life span. As a result of these experiences, people develop a locus of control orientation centered in a belief system that provides a framework for decision-making. In this sense, individuals must value something and perceive themselves as able to attain it (Rotter, 1966).

The areas of control are considered important for effective lifelong curiosity about life, a progressive view about life, a goal-oriented ideology regarding life,

a balance between autonomy and interdependent behavior, and a positive relationship with family and friends (Dolinger & Taub, 1977; Duttweiler, 1984; Lefcourt, 1976). Currently, "the emerging paradigm suggests that a supportive, warm, democratic and stimulating ecology is desirable for promoting a proactive control orientation" (Swick, 1986, p.44).

According to Erickson, (1982) "Locus of control is open to many influences that can promote or delay its formation over the life span. At each stage of life, individuals must have consistent experiences with controlling some of the vital aspects of their life," (Swick, 1986, p.44). Langer (1983) believes it is important to acknowledge that "peer relationships, school experiences, encounters at work, and the dynamics of marital or friendship relations influence locus of control development" (Swick, 1986, p.43).

Prior research has found that the older the child, the greater the internal orientation and a proclivity toward an internal locus of control (Crandall, Katkovsky, & Crandall, 1983, p.106). Often by the middle grades, the locus of control is already established and parental influence is not a key factor. Therefore, this study focuses directly on second, third, and fourth grade students attending a parochial day school in Boca Raton, Florida. It is assumed, but not proven, that the average student who attends the school is a member of a middle or upper middle class family. Many of the children enrolled live in an affluent community; many of the parents work in professional fields. Furthermore, several of the families have two working parents. In addition, the tuition of the school is costly; although, there is financial aid, the aid does not cover a great deal of the additional costs.

The school utilizes a Learning Resource subcommittee to make all recommendations for entrance into the gifted program. The results are based on the student's past achievement records, California Test of Basic Subjects (CTBS) scores, and also teacher recommendations. Parental consultation and approval must be agreed upon before the services can be initiated.

All of the subjects selected for this study have been documented as gifted by using the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC III)--a battery of tests for IQ, and the ACT (achievement) tests. The students are considered part of the gifted "Talent Pool" and are "Documented Intellectually Gifted" (DIG). The criteria for acceptance in DIG is: documentation of at least an IQ of 131, as determined by a formal testing service, including an agreement that support services are required. Support services include the establishment of an IEP with placement delineated by the child study team. Implementation of the following services must be endorsed by the Learning Resource subcommittee of the school's Education Committee. In accordance with the IEP, there will be:

1. Pull-out classes in a resource room on a regular basis.
2. A mentoring program initiated by a mentor (DIG staff member),
available for support services within the classroom.

3. Individual scheduling offered.
4. Curriculum compacting implemented.
5. Interest and learning style surveys issued and encouraged.

Additionally, the student's achievement tests scores must be at least in the 95th percentile or above. The student must exhibit superior performance in the classroom and the recommendation must be approved by the child study team.

The student must be able to manage a pull-out program including both secular and religious studies. Each student attends enrichment classes a minimum of twice weekly and works with a member of the DIG staff to make sure that his/her needs are met.

The literature focuses on locus of control as it relates to parental drives, pressures and unrealistic hopes and aspirations for their children. This paper attempted to answer several questions:

- 1. Is the internal locus of control actually owned by the student or is it encouraged and nurtured by the child's desire to please the parent?**
- 2. Does parental influence play an important role in academic achievement?**
- 3. How much does parental concern affect the child's tendency towards individuality and motivation?**
- 4. Does parental involvement in school policies and functions affect the child's internal locus of control?**

This research was conducted through interviews with parents, teachers and students. Original locus of control scales provided the measurement for locus of control.

CHAPTER 2

*** REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ***

The world of a child is composed of numerous channels joined to form a complex network. Entangled in this web are parents, peers, schools and communities that contribute, in varying degrees, influence over the child and his/her intellectual growth. Moreover, if a child is considered to be gifted, the components of the network are further complicated and additional challenges and considerations need to be realized.

*** DEFINING GIFTEDNESS ***

The youngsters who are extraordinarily intelligent have been recognized as far back as Plato as "children of gold" (Ritchie, Bernard & Shertzer, 1982, p.105).

According to Joseph Renzulli, Associate Director of the Bureau of Educational Research, University of Connecticut, there are a myriad of meanings and innumerable delineations for the term "Giftedness." From a conservative position, Lewis Terman's theory of giftedness includes only the top 1% in general intellectual ability, as measured by the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale or a comparable definition representing a more liberal viewpoint by Paul Witty.

There are children whose outstanding potentialities in art, writing or in social leadership can be recognized largely by their performance. Hence, we have recommended that the definition of giftedness be expanded and that we consider any child gifted whose performance in a potentially valuable line of human activity is consistently remarkable (Renzulli, 1978, p.12).

According to Silverman (1992):

Giftedness is a synchronous development in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm (p.1).

Silverman holds that the gifted child is more "vulnerable" and therefore needs "modifications in parenting, teaching and counseling in order for them to develop optimally (The Columbus Group, 1991, in Morelock, 1992).

Renzulli, (1978), expresses concern that often the measurement of giftedness is subjective and decided by "human judges" (p.11). Currently, 26 states are following the definition issue by the United States Department of Education (USOE):

Gifted and talented children are those... who by virtues of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These...children... require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their [potential] contribution to self and society (Ibid, p. 13).

In 1978, Florida, Idaho, North Carolina and Pennsylvania began to employ the standard Individual Educational Plan (IEP), authorized by P.L. 94-142 for the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (Karnes & Collins, 1978, 44-62).

Renzulli (1978) summarizes all the definitions and maintains that:

Giftedness consists of an interaction among three above-average general abilities, high levels of task commitment, and high levels of creativity. Gifted and talented children are those possessing basic clusters of human traits--the clusters being or capable of applying them to any potentially valuable area of human performance (p.16).

Marland (1972,) devised a description involving six areas:

1. General intellectual ability.
2. Specific academic aptitude.
3. Creative and productive thinking.
4. Leadership ability.
5. Visual and performing arts.
6. Psychomotor ability.

Recently, educators have begun to focus on parental input for purposes of identification as well as the implementation of alternative assessments (Colangelo & Dettman, 1983, p.21).

There are many misconceptions and false assumptions about gifted children. Often it is believed that because their intelligence is higher, these children are better able to overcome difficulties more easily than average children. In fact, the students often generate internal pressures to excel by reaching beyond reasonable verisimilitudes; these expectations, coupled with parent and teacher pressures, create anxieties and uncertainties (Roome & Romney, 1985, p. 177).

Students who are thought to be gifted are cognizant of their academic competencies and have cultivated self-concepts concordant with their knowledge and past achievements. Youngsters who consider themselves competent, will

proceed toward academic endeavors with assurance and expected fulfillment (Ross & Parker, 1980, p.6).

*** DEFINITION OF LOCUS OF CONTROL ***

The concept of locus of control has been defined by many researchers, offering several definitions for the same term. An investigation of locus of control and its connection to cognitive mediation of behavior was first explored by Rotter (1966). He believed it measured the degree of how much a person understands his/her circumstances and how these circumstances affect the outcome of his/her behavior (internal), or out of his/her control (external) (Crandall, et. al., 1983, p.92).

According to researchers, a person is able to distinguish between what he/she is able to control and therefore is able to control his/her fate (Creek, et al., 1991). Additionally, Levin (1992) purports that:

An individual who views success and failure as related to his or her actions is said to have a belief of internal control. In contrast, an individual who views outcomes as not contingent upon his or her actions, instead attributing events to luck, chance, fate or powerful others (peers, teachers, parents), is said to believe in external control (p.3).

However, "Locus of control is not a single construct, but a complex of beliefs" (Collier, Jacobson & Stahl, 1987). Additionally, "people believe they have some control over their choice-making actions," (Langer, 1983). Locus of control is a "mastery of one's environment" (Rubin, 1993, p.162). Langer states that locus of

control relates to "the person's perception of being able to select from various options available in the environment" (Langer, 1983, Swick & Graves, 1986, p.44). Additionally, "a high-internal-oriented student, if given a choice, will use options to optimize his level of success" (Clifford & Cleary, 1972, p.648).

There are several variables that interact and affect a child's locus of control. One theory, discussed by Levin, suggests that socioeconomic status (SES) is a reliable indicator in determining locus of control. Levin contends that, unlike people from a high SES, people considered in low social position may have limited possibilities in controlling or influencing their environment, often due to limited education, money and low paying vocations (Levin, 1992, p. 9). Shore and Young found, in a study they performed in 1953, that children in the middle to upper socioeconomic group appeared to be more internal than those children in the lower SES (Shore & Young, 1984, p.16). According to Crandall, et. al, (1965) people who are in the lower "social strata" may be there because of their type of employment, deficiency in education and inadequate money supplies to be able to "manipulate their environment." They may be in positions with limited opportunities to control the circumstances influencing their lives, as compared to those who are within high SES levels.

Research indicated highly significant social-class differences paralleled the childrens' answers on the Locus of Control and the Children's Picture test, (this test offers examples of general social experiences). In contrast, the IAR is comprised of questions directed to school-related responses (Crandall, et al., p.93). Past studies have shown that "Internals" and "Externals" will differ behaviorally in the following areas: reactions to stress, control of behavior and academic effort

(Coppel & Smith, 1980; Lefcourt, 1980; Murray & Staebler, 1974; Ross, Bierbrauer and Polly, 1974; Strickland, 1977, 1978). Many researchers have observed and recorded major differences in: "information-processing, achievement, interpersonal behavior and psychological adjustment" in children with locus of control (Mead-Fox & Kralj, 1985, p.1). Moreover, Collier, et al., maintain that internal-external locus of control focuses on the degree to which people "perceive contingency relationships between their actions and their outcomes" (Collier, Jacobson, & Stahl, 1987; Davis & Phares 1967, p.547). Locus of control affects motivation and behavior (Brender, 1987). Murray and Staebler believe how a child perceives the control over his/her environment is a solid predictor of how successful that child will be in school. Stipek & Weisz (1981) cite a number of studies that provide evidence of relationships between locus of control and perseverance in completing tasks. They discuss studies where evidence of those children with an internal locus of control are more apt to postpone immediate gratification than children with external locus of control.

Harty, Adkins and Hungate (1984) conducted a study to find out whether self-concept and locus of control would be possible "nontraditional measures to identify gifted students." The result of the study implied that those students who exhibited internal locus of control were inclined to be more self-motivating and appeared to have greater control of their environment (p.90). This finding was supported by (Rotter, Chance, & Phares (1972), Phares, (1976), and Lefcourt (1976).

Duke and Nowicki (1974) and Messer (1972) found that students who exhibited internality received higher grades and performed better on achievement

tests (Kanoy, Johnson, & Kanoy, 1980, p.396). Conversely, Davis and Connell (1985), discovered that gifted students who were considered underachievers, had a great internal locus of control than those gifted students who were high achievers (McClelland, Yewchuk & Mulcahy, 1991, p.389). This incongruous discovery indicates the notion that achievement, giftedness and locus of control may depend on the combination of variables such as age, gender, size of the testing sample and the tools used for measurement (Collier, et al., 1987).

Often researchers believe that internal locus of control will affect school achievement positively and that achievement will, in turn, affect locus of control. According to Davis and Phares (1967) "locus of control is the extent that people believe that reinforcement is contingent upon their own behavior" (p.547). Internals see themselves as being responsible for the outcomes of their actions and interactions. They exercise pleasant and proficient behavior and strive for achievement and growth in social relationships (Nowicki & Duke, 1983; Rubin, 1993, p.162). Additionally, past research verifies a correlation between expectancies by adults and the final outcomes of the child. However, the studies do not explain the means by which it develops. This may reveal the speculative idea that locus of control does not directly affect behavior, but must be interpolated with other personal characteristics, reinforcement value and individual circumstances (Rotter, 1975). The Coleman Report submitted that academic success was connected to the locus of control variable in conjunction with student attitudes, family and teacher factors. The majority of past empirical research examines the development of the child's cognitive abilities: intelligence, achievement and creativity; often omitting personality characteristics and how they

might possibly elevate a child's intellectual growth and academic accomplishments. It is questionable whether these personality characteristics are influential in fostering the child's emotional self-image or degree of orientation. A solid family orientation toward achievement may influence a child's success in academic areas, but may not reinforce his/her self-esteem. Additionally, Lefcourt (1982) found that a child's internal locus of control can be altered by adopting varying modifications in "classroom procedures, counseling and achievement motivation training" (Levin, 1992, p.14). There are several researchers who will agree that a child's locus of control can be changed (deCharms, 1972; Walden & Ramey, 1983; Charlton & Terrell, 1987; Levin, 1992, p.28).

**** PARENTS AND LOCUS OF CONTROL ****

There are numerous variables that directly or indirectly have climacteric effects on an individual's life. Parents provide primary learning experiences for children. The more time parents devote to their children, the more they can understand what their children are interested in and offer appropriate learning experiences (Silverman, 1992, p.2). Lefcourt (1976) maintains that control occurs from early childhood. He further declares that when parents protect and do not suppress individuality, shield children from the unreasonable disappointments facing young children, the children will be able to tackle life's demands. Events occurring within the family are key contributors to how "individuals develop and refine their locus ideology through the many experiences they have over a life span" (Swick & Graves, 1986, p.44). A child's socialization skill is part of the control system

(Swick, 1986, p.44). Feelings of security and a solid sense of identity is established when parents encourage children. It has been found when parents do not show concern, antisocial behaviors can arise and children will lean towards external events to direct their lives (Raine, Roger & Venables, 1982).

Crandall, et al., (1983) found that position in the family among siblings can affect a child's locus of control. The child who is born first often is expected to assume more responsibilities than his/her younger siblings and is expected to act in a mature manner. The eldest child understands at an early age that his/her actions will effect his/her own successes and failures as well as the well-being of his family members. Moreover, the smaller the family, the more the child must stand on his own (p.106).

Swick (1986) contends that parental attributes and attitudes have significant affects on children's internal locus of control. Some attributes crucial to effective parenting are:

- 1). Progressive beliefs.
- 2). Internal locus of control.
- 3). Knowledge of self, children and environment.
- 4). Harmonious family relationships (Sigel, 1985).

Consequently, it is important to examine the total extent to which parents are involved in the child's locus of control. As part of their profile, gifted children are naturally inquisitive and often "challenge authority." "Do it because I said so" can be useless in responding to the gifted child (Silverman, 1992, p.2). Research has proven that "effective parenting and healthy family relationships have been

significant components in children's self-concepts and well-being (Stinnett, 1980). For example, Graves (1986) found that parents who were externally control oriented to an extreme had a negative influence on the child's development. Moreover, Watson (1981) pointed toward inadequate neighborhood support systems as a negative influence on parental functioning. Additionally, Murray and Stabler (1974) believe that it "is not what parents do with their children, but how they do it, which is most important to the child's personality adjustment." A child will thrive academically if positive self-concepts and locus of control are linked together (Levin, 1992). Moreover, when children experience recurring accomplishments in school activities, self-confidence and belief in one's internal control will increase (Rotter, 1966).

*** *LOCUS OF CONTROL AND GENDER* ***

While questioning the theory that females are more internal than external in their control, a study was performed supporting the theory that outcomes were directed from factors within their control. According to the Coleman Report "a measure of internality was emphasized as a highly important predictor of academic achievement in both white and black children" (Collier, et al., 1987). In one study, the researcher found that:

.... self-responsibility is already established by third grade, that older girls give more self-responsible answers than older boys, and that slight but significant age changes occur in integral scores dependent upon the sex of the child (Crandall, et al., 1965).

Levenson (1973) found that the locus of control in males was more positively internalized as a reaction to the behavior of the mother (p.5) In contrast, the females internality was influenced negatively when the mother was over protective. Students reported that parents who exhibited more punishing and controlling type behaviors, believed that control by others had more affect on them than their own. Students who believed their parents rearing practices and standards were erratic, leaned toward believing in external control of chance (Levenson, 1973, p. 262.)

Reimanis (1971) found that female students who believed their mothers did not care about them, had noticeable higher internal scores. He postulated that it was possible that understanding, responsive families might rear their daughters with the view that females should be more dependent, (external) on others, boys should not. Other investigators such as Davis and Phares (1969), have not found gender differences. Katkovsky, et al. (1967) found that babying and overprotectiveness were related to internality. The concept contended that a sense of security furnished by nonthreatening parents would encourage the child to accept responsibility for his deeds. Additionally, fathers were considered as a more trenchant influence in generating internality.

Macdonald (1971) conducted a study and found that mothers played a more central role in establishing feelings of competency. The study found that males who were helped and taught by their mothers had higher internal scale scores. There were no similar finds for females. In fact, those girls who perceived that their mothers did not worry about them had significantly higher internal scores than those who thought their mothers were protective. These results paralleled

Reimanis (1971), who reasoned that when the home environment is somewhat rejecting, the daughter may be forced to be more independent (internal) to satisfy her needs. Additionally, the study found that investigating parental antecedents of locus of control is necessary and there remains a need to evaluate personality data for female and males separately.

In conclusion, there seems to be inconsistent findings among researchers in the area of gender differences. In addition, other researchers have indicated that there might be variances in: the degree to which a consistent upbringing relates to internality; the relationship of parental overprotectiveness to locus of control; sex differences in internal control-home environment relationship and the relative influences of mothers' versus fathers' behavior on the control expectancies of their children (Davis & Phares, 1969; Katkovsky, et al., 1967; MacDonald, 1971; Reimanis, 1971).

*** LOCUS OF CONTROL AND GIFTED STUDENTS ***

Several of the past studies have focused on comparing gifted students to nongifted students. Researchers found that gifted children tend to be more internal in their attributions of success and failure than normally achieving students. These students do not blame it on: "chance, happenstance, or unpredictable circumstance" (Collier, et al, 1987). The possibility that locus of control may be related in gifted children to:

task commitment, persistence, and willingness to take risk has been examined as well. A gifted child with a stronger sense of internal control may persevere more often, and thus accomplish more (Collier, et al., 1987).

Locus of control is only one of many characteristics of gifted children. Research has also shown that gifted children show more positive feelings toward learning than children with lower IQ's. Currently, theorists like Levin (1992), p.10-11) suggest that the more internal the individual's orientation, the higher the individual's achievement. Consequently, the reason the child is more likely to engage in challenging tasks is certainly understandable, since a child who views himself or herself as in control of reinforcements will be more likely to engage in activities leading to them (Crandall, et al., 1965, p.104). Crandall, et al., (1965) have found that the bright child has the ability to understand a correlation between both self-crediting and self-blaming responses and intelligence because he/she can distinguish the antecedents of the rewards or punishments received from his behavior. This behavior allows him/her to orchestrate his environment more effectively than the average child. He/she sees that what happens to him/her can be controlled and that success will occur more often and with greater proficiency than the child with lesser ability. He/she can assume the blame for those failures because continuous success generates a sense of security to do so.

In a study conducted by Shaw and Uhl (1971), reading scores were measured and compared between low and upper-middle socioeconomic groups in order to examine the connection between a child's locus of control and school achievement. Reading scores were used as a form of academic measurement and locus of control as the personality protean. The study found that subjects in the upper-middle

socioeconomic group demonstrated greater internality. The possibility that reading was stressed in the homes of the upper-middle economic group might have been the reason for the positive results. The researchers noted that, if reading was not stressed in the homes of the lower socioeconomic group, the students would "fail to incorporate the importance of reading in their value system" and, therefore, the results of the study could not conclude that internality or externality are factors in achievement. The authors contended that, if these results are accurate, then schools should take an active role in educating the parents of all socioeconomic groups in the values and objectives of the school (p.228).

Internal or external inclinations often account for individual differences in achievement performances. In 1986, Brody and Benbow conducted a study with gifted children ages 9-12, measuring variables such as gender, self-concept and locus of control. They utilized a multi-method approach which included three self-report measures of various aspects of self-concept and used both mothers' and teachers' ratings. The outcome indicated that gifted girls inclined to have more internal locus of control than the nongifted girls, while gifted males did not differ significantly from nongifted males (Lum, 1988, p.19). Lovecky examined gifted adults and their relationships with others. Lovecky found the main characteristics were: "divergency, excitability, sensitivity, perceptively, and entelechy (goals), (1992, p.18). These were found to be negative or positive. Lovecky (1992) suggested that if the child is able to make positive adjustment of the above characteristics he/she will be able to achieve self-acceptance, obtain positive personal relationships and discover justification for personal control

(Lum, 1988, p.11). Brody and Benbow further supported this belief that internal control parallels success in school while external control leads to "anxiety, adjustment problems and lower self-confidence" (1986, p.4).

* TEACHER RATINGS *

Buck and Austin (1971) stated that those students scoring high in internality were more highly rated by their teachers in positive classroom behaviors. These students had a tendency to be more active, driven and directed toward classroom achievement and exhibited positive classroom behavior. There have been several studies that have concluded that when teachers are internal themselves, they will produce higher degrees of academic accomplishments in their students than those teachers considered to be externally controlled, (Murray & Staebler, 1975; Rose, 1981). Vasquez found evidence, however, that underachieving gifted children are similarly internal in their perceived locus. If so, locus of control is a factor independent of achievement in gifted children. A particular locus of control construct has emerged as one important dimension in the study of cognitive mediation of behavior locus of control , which was first developed by Rotter (1966).

According to Fincham, Hokoda & Sanders, Jr. (1989), while examining learned helplessness and text anxiety, they found individual difference variables and achievement motivations can affect students performance in various settings. While examining age factor, researchers noted a change from the elementary school age to early adolescence. The young child correlates effort with ability while the latter

appears to develop an understanding of ability as capacity arises (Nicholls & Miller, 1984). It is possible that test anxiety and learned helplessness may not be strongly related to children's performance originally, but this connection can increase with age. Therefore, some scores in assessing motivational construct might anticipate later performance, even though these are not integrated with the performance at the time they are assessed. When children reach fifth grade, they perceive themselves as having inferior abilities and may exhibit greater motivational deficits in their performance (Fincham, et al., 1989, p.138).

Smey-Richman (1991) recommends that teachers can assist students in developing an internal locus of control by introducing cognitive and metacognitive techniques to attenuate performance.

*** PARENTAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS GIFTED STUDENTS ***

Some parents experience an abundance of misinterpretations about the gifted child and maintain "stereotypic" notions that can impede the understanding of their own child (Dewing, 1970). Although the size of the family has no bearing on ability or achievement, the attitudes and values of parents do have a bearing (Colangelo & Dettman, 1983, p.21). Additionally, cooperation and communication between the parent and the child is crucial, and directly influences the child's social adjustment and academic achievement. Colangelo & Dettman, (1983) believe that how parents raise their children is usually based on the model of what a "normal" child is like. Often when that child's behavior does not correspond to the expectations of what a normal child is supposed to be, the

parents frequently have an arduous task of managing the child. Morrow and Wilson (1964) confirmed that, in order for gifted children to develop positively, there should be sound interactions between the parent and child (Colangelo & Dettman, 1983). Results propose that when the family is supportive and relationships are open, the child's self-esteem and overall adjustment are elevated (Cornell & Grossberg, 1987, p. 59). When the parent's attitudes are reassuring and less rigid and dominating, the child's self-image is reinforced (Domino, 1979; Morrow & Wilson, 1961).

In a study conducted by Hackney (1981) one parent commented that having a gifted child in the home was a challenge. Hackney found that it:

1. Changed the standard roles of family members.
2. Influenced parent's emotions internally.
3. Expected the whole family to make numerous adjustments.
4. Often created distinctive family/neighborhood concerns, and often generated certain family/school issues (Mathews, West & Hosie, 1986, p.52).

Hackney advised that parents of gifted children should aim toward equalizing their energies between the "normal developmental needs" and the "special intellectual needs" (Hackney, 1981).

Frequently, the school does not offer guidance for participation of the parents in the child's education. Often when guidance is provided, it has not been necessarily individualized sufficiently for it to be worthwhile. Further, because there is a diversity among the population of gifted children, there is not always a clear understanding of the family influence (Ross, 1964).

Parker & Colangelo (1979) performed a study using the Rokeach Values Survey. The results of this study found on the instrumental scale that mothers showed more differences with gifted sons and daughters than fathers from their gifted sons and daughters on the terminal scale (Colangelo & Dettman, 1983).

Some families of gifted children may exhibit a mixture of emotions ranging from love, kindness, pleasure, and jubilation, to apprehension, exasperation, melancholy, frustration, and despondency. If the family squelches feelings that need to be experienced, the child may acquire a similar profile. Self-concept, self-esteem and low self-evaluation, when it relates to the family have been considered to be the basis for not achieving. Tolor and Jalowiec (1968) contend that when a child's feelings of adequacy develop to form a self-identity, the identity will be a factor in the formation of attitudes of either internal or external locus of control. In their study, they attempted to prove that when the parents are inconsistent or foster rejection without regard to the child's behavior, the child will learn to expect to receive rewards from powers that are removed from his/her control (Tolor & Jalowiec, 1968, p.208).

Many parents of gifted children have been inclined to permit those children more freedom to choose their own friends, make decisions, and to stimulate creative pastimes and activities (Dewing, 1970). Loeb and Jay (1987) examined gifted children ages 9-12 and measured variables such as gender, self-concept and locus of control. A multidimensional instrument was used which included: three self-report measures covering different outlooks of self-concept, mothers' ratings and teachers' ratings. The subjects included gifted as well as nongifted students. The outcome concluded that gifted girls were inclined to have more internal locus

of control than nongifted girls, however, there appeared to be no significant difference between gifted males and nongifted males. The mothers of gifted sons infrequently recounted learning difficulties and advocated oral communication, highlighting independence compared to the mothers of nongifted children who highlighted physical communication and compliance (Lum, 1988, p.13-14). Parents can play an important part in the inducement of a positive outlook toward learning and an optimistic feeling of self-worth, by modeling an appreciation of knowledge and the merits of learning (Coffey, et al, 1976; Ginsberg & Harrison, 1977). This reassurance will inculcate the self-assurance necessary to relate to gifted children because they are often too critical and judgmental of themselves, exhibiting perfectionist ideals and setting unrealistic and extreme standards (Michael, 1968; Ross, 1964). Along with instilling confidence, parents need to assist the child in coping with failure. Additionally, parents should avoid establishing unreasonable conditions that insist upon 100% success (Ross, 1964).

Frequently, parents may think that they are unable to supply the "educational resources of intellectual stimulation" fundamental in helping the gifted child further his/her unique abilities. Sometimes parents have felt so threatened by the ability and uniqueness of their gifted child, that they have found it easier to ignore or reject the uniqueness of that child (Laycock, 1951-52). However, Bridges (1973) also found that parents may become excited because the bright child can be a step up in socioeconomic status. This becomes a problem only when parents have inordinate expectations about their child's achievement, (Ross, 1964; Colangelo & Dettman, 1983, p.22). "This discrepancy between the intellectual and social-emotional development of the gifted child often creates stress for the child and

parents alike" (Ross, 1964, p. 160). Ross also concludes that the "exceptional status of the gifted child also disrupts sibling relationships."

Another dilemma for parents is that they do not always communicate their expectations of their gifted child to each other. For example, one parent may emphasize effort in school work, while the other parent may emphasize achievement. In these situations, the child may develop a manipulative technique of "divide and conquer" (Fine, 1977).

We cannot negate that some gifted students are underachievers. Research shows that the underachiever frequently experienced considerable parental rejection and hostility (Hurley, 1965), whereas students who were high achievers had accepting and affectionate parents, (Karnes, et al., 1961). Past studies have shown that pressure from parents has been a direct cause of underachievement (Fine, 1977; Karnes, et al.; 1961). On the other hand, when parents had fairly high aspirations but gave their children a wide margin to express independence and exert personal autonomy, their children seemed more apt to cultivate their giftedness in a positive manner (Cutts & Mosely, 1953; Fine, 1977).

Lum addressed the idea that families of gifted children might have difficulties in adjusting to the children's differences, often plaguing parents with added concerns and deficiencies. There may also be problems among parents and children with the additional variable of sibling rivalry (1988, p. 6).

When the parents demonstrated a serious degree of commitment at home, they contributed positively to the child's achievement (Child Development Institute, 1976). The more the parents expressed trust and support and the less restrictive and severe their attitudes, the greater the child's achievements. In families that

fostered positive attitudes towards teachers, school, and intellectual activities, the children were encouraged to reach their potential (Colangelo & Dettman, 1983 p.23).

An investigation conducted by Karnes and Shwedel focused on the gifted and non-gifted and how they related to their fathers. The study attempted to display that parent involvement is now considered a key factor in the educational process of the young child; one example of this is the Head Start program. Most of the time, parent involvement focused on the mother only, and the father's input is downplayed or overlooked. The study found that fathers of gifted students were more likely to define strategies they used to avoid hindering their child's self-image. The fathers conveyed an absolute optimistic concern and refrained from responding negatively to the children. The fathers appeared to be captivated by the questions posed by their children. The fathers considered the children to be curious beings (Karnes & Shwedel, 1987, p.81-82).

Karnes, Shwedel & Steinberg (1984) also pointed out that fathers of gifted children strove to safeguard their children's positive self-esteem, yet, they were aware of their children's challenges. Many of the fathers surveyed, let the youngsters respond to questions asked and permitted them to act independently. The focus of this study was to persuade the fathers to participate more in the classroom which would offer them suggestions and ideas to implement in the home, and perhaps offer more important tangible knowledge concerning their child's school experience, p.232).

Getzels and Jackson (1964) showed that fathers of highly creative children were more permissive and were less apt to pressure children into conventional

behavior (Colangelo & Duttman, 1983, p.21). Conversely, Gallagher (1975) and Weissberg & Springer (1961) found that families of creative children tended not to be close knit and did not share warmhearted relationships (Colangelo & Duttman, 1983, p.21).

*** MEASURING LOCUS OF CONTROL ***

Past researchers have performed numerous studies involving a variety of measurement scales. There are three instruments widely used in the measurement of the locus of control. The Nowicki-Strickland (NS), Locus of Control Scale for Children (NS), the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire (IARQ) and the Bailer-Crowned (BC) Children's Locus of Control Scale for Children.. Both the NS (19 items) and the BC (23 items) expect subjects to reply to a Yes/No format. The (20 items) expects subjects to select one or two alternatives so they can finish a specific statement. The IARQ is a questionnaire that rates the degree to which students accept accountability for his/her own academic achievement, (Collier, et al., 1987, p.197). The IARQ is used as a measurement of locus of control as it relates to academic success.

Crandall, et al., (1965) collected information on 923 students in grades 3-12. The results connoted that self-responsibility is often fixed by third grade, that older girls often gave answers that demonstrated self-responsibility than older boys, and that minimal but notable age changes appear within subscale scores in relation to gender. Often these subjects felt that the rewards or punishments they received did not hinge on their efforts, but were granted to them at the option of "powerful others, luck or fate." The authors contended that the "same reinforcement in the

same situation may have been perceived by one individual as within his own control and by another as outside of own influence" (1965).

The Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire (IARQ) tries to measure affiliation, dominance achievement and dependency, while other scales include a variety of sources and agents such as luck, fate, impersonal social forces, and more-personal "significant others." The IARQ limits the source of external control to the persons who most often come in face to face contact with a child, his parents, teachers and peers.

All three scales are used for elementary and middle school age students. Researchers contend that there should be further examination of task persistence and striving where motivational factors may be primary determinants (Crandall, et al., p.108). Researchers have also developed a test to determine internal vs. external control, called the Internal vs. External scale (I-E). Research using IE found that a belief in external responsibility is positively correlated with defensive and maladaptive level of aspiration behavior (Phares, 1957; Simmons 1959).

In one study, this scale supported the hypothesis that external responsibility is related to "defensive and maladaptive levels of aspiration behaviors" (Crandall, et al., 1965). Its aim was to measure a "unidimensional construct in which internality and externality were extreme on a single factor." Subsequently, researchers who conducted analyses of the original Rotter scale found it proposed to examine several separate factors (Gurin, Gurin, Lao, & Beattie, 1969; Mirels, 1970; Phares, 1976; 1978; Joe, 1971; Lefcourt, 1972; Levenson, 1972; Levenson, 1973, p.261).

Levenson and Muller adapted a modified scale including three factors: "belief in internal control, chance control, and control over powerful others" (1976).

Strickland (1977) found that, because there are a multitude of factors contributing to locus of control, the scale cannot remain constant when examining population or gender. Other investigators have emphasized the situational specificity of the I-E contradicts, and recommend that locus of control scales should be constructed specific to the situational characteristic under study. Several researchers found that one measure of locus of control (IARQ) was among several measures which significantly discriminated between gifted and nongifted subjects. The IARQ, consisting of 20 items, instructs subjects to select one of two options in order to complete a given statement. However, the studies cited were not without limitation. Due to the number of subjects used and their design, the results may be questionable (Lefcourt, 1980; Phares, 1976-1978; Delise & Renzulli, 1982). According to Fincham et al., the IARQ is a 34-item forced choice questionnaire, in which each item on the scale represents either a success or failure achievement situation and two exchangeable reasons for the effort; an external quality is compared to an effort or an ability. The main objective of the scale is to compare lack of effort to any external determinants that might influence failure. The test is composed of a subscale of 10 items. According to Mirels (1970), the I-E does not maintain a good measure of helplessness because it conjectures that children who usually generate a blame for failure on ability, will opt for an external attribution. Rotter has theorized that the reason the test fails to acquire sound connections may be associated with the individual's attitudes about questions posed on the scale items or on the areas of behavior examined (Mirels, 1970, p.226).

Another scale, the Barron Independent of Judgment Scale, proved that individuals who hold strong convictions of internal responsibility exhibit less "conforming attitudes" and display less behavioral conformity to group pressure (Crandall, et al., 1965, p.92). Lum conducted a study using the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale, concluding that the learning disabled children and the gifted were most internal.

A chance scale was developed to measure a generalized prospect to explore distinctive relationships which parents believe they have with their children. Lewis, (1981) has proposed a very interesting reinterpretation of parental control which may explain the nature of this scale. Lewis contended that control promotes effective child internalization, while Baumrind (1973) and Maccoby (1980) proposed that parent control may be reinterpreted as an evaluation of how much the child is willing to obey, as it measures harmony or discord between the parent and the child. In a study aimed at questioning parents, Kralj (1981) employed the Parenting Locus of Control Scale (PLCS). This was designed to measure multidimensional criteria and has proven to produce solid internal consistency. It included a three-week test-retest stability for two subscales to examine parental control and chance control. The PLCS offered a useful research implement to examine "one dimension of parent cognitive mediation" and its significance to parenting (p.15). Parke cited numerous studies indicating that hopes, desires and stereotypes from parents can affect their attitudes and actions with children. Parke has suggested that future researchers create and implement measures of parental awareness to add to researchers directly viewing the interactions between the parent and child. Modell and Tyler (1981) studied the

relationship between the locus of control of parents and their true behaviors, while interfacing with their preschool offspring. The researchers found that the parents who were considered to be internal, trustful, and exhibited a fun-loving management style, were rated by the use of the I-E scale (Rotter, 1960), the Rotter trust scale (Rotter, 1967) and the Behavioral Attributes of Psychosocial Competence Scale (Tyler, 1978). Each parent showed a specific style of behavior with his/her children. The results indicated that the indirect solution techniques were used by those parents exhibiting competent behaviors. The parents offered helpful advice and approval and implemented less directives and less vocal criticism. Although assessment of the child was omitted from the study, the research did illustrate that behaviors of parents can have a direct affect on the child's locus of control.

Several situation specific scales such as the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire (Crandall, et al., 1965, p.93), the Health Locus of Control Scale (Wallston, Maides & Wallston, 1976) and the Teachers' Locus of control scales. Rose & Medway (1981) have shown improved predictive power (Kralj, et al., 1981). The Parenting Locus of Control Scale (PLOC) was developed using a group of statements from which parents can choose degrees of agreements or disagreements on a 4 point Likert Scale. Selections were designed to assign cause to one of the four areas: parent control, child, control, control from peers, siblings, teachers etc., and chance control to fate or luck. Each area was questioned equally covering positive or negative results, attempting to employ conditions pertaining to relationships between parent and child regarding: Homelife, School and Health.

A causality scale was devised known as the Hereford Parent Attitude Survey Scale (Hereford, 1973). It was created to evaluate how much parents perceive themselves as operative representative on their child's lives in contrast with viewing their child's performance as a result of unyielding influences from fate or genetic certainty. The findings showed that mothers' attitudes do not necessarily vary from fathers' and that the parents' age is not a consideration in the answer patterns.

In 1982, Douglas and Powers focused on determining whether effort is more important than ability, context and luck. This study centered on gifted high school students; its purpose was to examine the connection between a mixture of "goal-specific attribution processes and the correlation between these attribution processes. These were appraised by a "multidimensional-multi-attributional causality scale" of 24 causal attribution assertions. Answers were rated by a five-point Likert-format from 0 (disagree) to 4 (agree). The Lefcourt scale included: ability (academic ability and skill), effort (studying and working hard), context, (teacher's grading scheme and course materials), and luck (luck and chance factors). The four subscales could be arranged to calculate internality (ability and context), and instability (effort and luck)" (Douglas & Powers, 1982).

Many researchers have used the Piers-Harris Children's Self-concept scale for measurement. The scale measures behavior, intellect, school status, physical appearance, and attributes, of anxiety, popularity and happiness (Levin, 1992). Dolan (1978) devised a home support interview conducted with a random sample of 120 parents. Academic achievement was the variable used to examine the degree of parental endorsement. The interviews were considered particularly

worthwhile because they were administered by the school and community agents. Those students involved in an expansion program displayed a notably higher locus of control than students from regular school. The research surprisingly found that larger families had inverse relationships with greater locus of control; the reason for this might have been attributed to varying stratum among the interaction of the family members themselves. The study also found that the parents who participated frequently in school related activities supported their children's academic achievement. The author's contended that when parents enriched their home environments, their children's academic successes were expanded. Bronfenbrenner (1975) advocated the necessity for programs to intertwine with the home in order for long term positive effects to take place.

Conrad and Eash (1983) performed a study questioning whether increased achievement was due to locus of control, parental involvement or a suitably-constructed classroom atmosphere with limited student numbers.

Finger (1982) conducted a study that measured the relationship of giftedness, sex, age and their interactions. The principle conclusions were mixed and he contended that there was inconsistency in the literature. Further, Finger believed that the need to create more reliable and precise instruments to measure the construct was necessary.

Based on the information gleaned from the plethora of past research written, there remains some questions that need to be answered. This study is directed toward discovering whether a mother's attitudes will influence a gifted child's internal locus of control.

CHAPTER 3

* RESEARCH DESIGN *

My research methodology and design was established by adopting the theory of qualitative analysis which focuses on "words rather than numbers" as described by Miles and Huberman (1984, p.21). Data was gathered by interviews with students who have been documented gifted and their parents. Documented gifted are those students who, characteristically, "excel in academic achievement and are at least two standard deviations above the mean on intelligence and achievement measures" (Lum, 1988, p.6). Lum also states that researchers are currently examining the possibility that gifted children might also exhibit "superior psychological adjustment," (Lum, 1988, p. 6). However, during my research of the review of the literature, I did not come across data to substantiate this opinion.

The interviews focused on seven boys currently enrolled in second, third and fourth grade in a private school. Their IQ full scale scores ranged from 131 to 160. Six of the seven youngsters' verbal scores far exceeded their performance scores. All interviews were conducted utilizing tape recordings to reaffirm conversations for later review and interpretation. Following the interviews, the tape recorded results were transcribed into written form.

According to Miles and Huberman, "analysis consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification." Miles and Huberman considered data reduction as part of the total picture of

"focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the raw data" that we expect to find while amassing our information (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p.21).

In order to actualize the data, I attempted to implement a cross-case analysis, in hopes that this strategy of an inquiry would be helpful in effecting a means of paralleling data without "distorting, throwing away, or forcing the patterns found." (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 23). This can be accomplished by expanding the ability to generalize, supporting the opinions that the circumstances and procedures in one particular situation will not be completely representative of all situations. Or, as Miles & Huberman (1984) point out," the problem is seeing processes and outcomes that occur across many cases or sites, and understanding how such processes are bent by specific local contextual variation" (p.151).

According to several researchers, locus of control cannot be viewed as a unidimensional stratum but must be examined on a multi-dimensional plane (Mirels, 1970; Gurin, et al., 1969). In order to effectuate my research, I examined several scales for measuring locus of control, each having its own distinct purpose. In order to address my particular topic, I found the necessity to modify and/or create questions paralleling what some researchers have already implemented. The questionnaires used in the interviews with the mothers (See Appendix D) and students (see Appendix E) were taken from the IARQ scale (see review of the literature). The questions were altered or modified to fit the requisites of this research. Furthermore, a questionnaire used by Fincham, Hokkaido & Sanders, Jr. (1989) was modified to fit the purpose of this study (p.144). The questionnaire was in the form of a behavior scale, similar to a Likert scale. The questionnaire was to be issued to the teachers in order to assess and validate responses collected

from the students and parents. I reserved the option of interviewing teachers in case I found a caveat in aggregating a clear image of each student's locus of control. If that had been the case, I would have formulated interview questions for the teachers involved.

Moreover, after reviewing the above questionnaires and scales, I decided that in order to formulate a realistic picture in determining parental influences and attitudes, it was more practical to devise interview questions that feature information I believe would satisfy my research questions. By creating my own questions I believed that I was able to personalize the interview process.

According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994) there is a need for the "use of probes or follow up questions in a research interview" (p.95). Patton (1990) contends that a probe is:

An interview tool used to go deeper into the interview responses, and by probing an interviewee's response, we are likely to add to the richness of the data, and end up with better understanding of the phenomenon we are studying (p.238).

There are three types of probes: *Detail-oriented probes*, used to refine and obtain more content; *Elaboration probes*, aimed toward eliciting more information; and *Clarification probes*, assuring the interviewer complete comprehension of the response. The use of the tape recorder will enable the interviewer to reevaluate the question process for later interviews.

It is important to establish a positive interviewer-interviewee relationship. Mishler contends that this fusion will help people in "their efforts to construct coherent and reasonable worlds of meaning and to make sense of their experiences,

when the balance of power is shifted, interviewees are more likely to tell their own stories (1986, p.118).

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) indicated the importance of having the necessary materials for the interview prepared in advance. They suggested the following tools: tape recorder (batteries, electrical cord, extension cord), cassette tapes, interview guide, and pen and paper for notetaking. They recommended that the interviewer meet the interviewee promptly, check background noise for interference, test recorder and replay test, and offer suggestions to the interviewee to speak louder or slower. After all necessary preparations have been accomplished, it is time to begin the interview. Shortly after each interview has ended, they suggested writing down any information that the researcher feels is significant and that could not be reflected on the recording such as "facial expressions, body posture, mood, and other observations" (Maykut & Morehouse 1994). Additionally, it was important to record the researcher's own feelings during the interview. I followed their methodology during and after the interviews.

Prior to beginning the actual research, I remitted twenty letters to all students documented gifted in the school in grades second through fourth. These letters explained the intent of my research, authorized permission to interview the students and requested an interview with the parents (See Appendices A, B and C). Fourteen of the twenty letters were sent to the families of boys, and responses from families willing to take part in the study were mostly returned by the male students' families. Because of the imbalance in gender, I chose only to focus on the boys. Although some families indicated that they wanted to participate, the

fathers traveled and were too busy to take part in the study. Additionally, there was one single parent, influencing my decision to limit my interviews to only mothers. I conducted seven interviews with seven students and seven parents over a three week period. All interviews with the students were conducted in person using a tape recorder. Five of the mother interviews were conducted in person, however, due to necessity, two of the mothers' interviews were conducted over the telephone. All interviews conducted in person were then transcribed onto the computer. The two interviews conducted over the phone were directly put into the computer. Each interview was conducted with the child first and then the respective mother. The boys' interviews took place in either the school library or the gifted classroom. The parent interviews took place in the gifted classroom, my classroom, and one student's home.

The following pseudonyms will be used to assure anonymity and differentiate the students. Masters Red, Orange, Purple and Gold are in the second grade, Master Green is in the third grade, and Masters White and Black are in the fourth grade. Their mothers will be referred to as: Mrs. Red, Orange, Purple, Green, Gold, White and Black. Masters Orange, Black and White are only children; Masters Purple and Gold are the youngest of two children in the family; Master Red is the oldest of two children and Master Green is the youngest of three children.

CHAPTER 4

* PRESENTATION OF DATA *

Sydney P. Marland (1972), in an announcement to Congress, stated that gifted children are often the "most neglected minority in American education." Often the necessities of these students are not met; consequently, parents must focus their concern on assuring an appropriate education for their gifted students. In contrast, the law requires services for the learning disabled students. It protects their rights and individual needs and compels parents to agree to these services determined by the system. Therefore, parents of documented learning disabled do not have the freedom to choose whether they want to be in a special program, gifted students and their families do (Ross, 1964). Sanborn (1979) stated that, "It probably goes without saying that parents play powerful roles in the development of their children. For better or worse, the capacities and proclivities of the child reflect the impact of the parents (p. 396)."

In this study, all parents played an active role in deciding the appropriate education for their sons. Some researched as many as 15 pre-schools, while others selected the school that friends had recommended.

Past researchers have seen a close relationship between maternal locus of control and parenting and supplying enriching educational opportunities within the family and "encouraging children to be curious" (Swick & Graves, 1986 p.46).

The mothers noticed gifted characteristics from two and half years to six years of age, the average around three to four years of age. When asked to describe why they believed their children to be gifted one mother thought "his cognitive abilities were advanced and language abilities and [he had] thoughtful expressions." Another mother recalled:

He could figure things out, he had the ability to see the whole picture, he started speaking in complete sentences at nine month old. It was like a parrot, for every book I read to him, for every conversation he ever heard from other people. But not just mimicking, he truly understood it, and he could work my entire stereo system when he was two years old.

Another mother remarked:

I didn't realize it till he was about four. I look back hindsight, I remember him being eleven months old, climbing, taking a chair, climbing, and putting a bagel in the microwave; and putting the microwave on. I stood and watched this because I could not believe this; and I have pictures of him also being about 13 or 14 months old pushing a chair because he was going to help me wash the dishes.

One mother continued:

He would pick things up real quick. I just always thought because we had just one child and he was raised in an adult environment that was normal, and well, I don't know that I noticed he displayed characteristics of a gifted child, but noticed he was very perceptive and analytical when he was probably three or four.

All the mothers appeared to recall instances when their child's behavior was unusual and advanced for his age group.

My next question focused on questioning the boys to detect whether they truly understood the reason for their admittance into the gifted program.

When I asked them, "*Why do you think you are part of the gifted program?*" a few of them responded that they did their work, were smart and did well on a test.

While Master Black averred:

I don't know, I don't think I'm smarter than a lot of people at all. Or maybe I'm just part of the DIG program because I had a test taken and my knowledge was shown, and my IQ. I had a really high IQ. That's pretty much it why I think I'm in the DIG program.

Master Green answered, "Because I'm gifted." "How do you know?" I probed. "My mom," he answered. These responses appeared to display an internality that each took responsibility for their successes (Crandall, et al., 1985) except for Master Green who appeared to rely more on what his mother thought. I explored further, trying to elicit responses from the mothers how their sons' giftedness affected them and how they felt about it. I then asked, "*How did you treat him when you found out he was gifted?*" One mother said :

I had to be very careful, part of me was very proud, another part of me realized I was going to face insurmountable challenges. How was I going to do this and who was going to guide me the right way? Because people are people whether you live in Israel or America or China or South Africa, but there are some values that are just a little bit different. An American to an American family; and I'm South African and I am trying to combine, let alone have these extra challenges.

Mrs. White stated, "No differently, just a child, I wasn't sure if it was me being a mother and you know like first of all he's my only child so I have no other ruler, he's my yardstick so I just treated him that way."

Mrs. Red amusingly exclaimed that she treated him the "Same, he still had to do

chores." While Mrs. Orange felt it was, "Nothing different, I don't make a big deal of it, because I'm of a different belief, I really think that being productive, hard working is more important than just having this gift."

In response to the question, "*Did you do anything to encourage this giftedness at home?*" Answers ranged from: Mrs. Red: "I would provide him with as many experiences as possible with family, expose him to as many things as possible." Mrs. Gold recalled:

He started with computer at a very young age and we gave him a lot of programs; mainly because when he was five he broke both his legs in a skiing accident. He had an opportunity to sit for three months and not be able to do much and that's when all the computer skills and everything really came into being. He sat at the computer and figured things out and then would spew facts later in the day that was just part of his vocabulary. He became a couch potato.

Mrs. Green had related earlier that she was gifted and so was one of her other children; so that when Master Green was documented gifted she did not treat him any differently, in fact she "anticipated it."

Mrs. White claimed that:

Oh, I tried to get him to read certain things. I tried to take him to plays and musicals. He really is not interested in that stuff. He doesn't like to read to this day, he is a sports fanatic. He could probably cite you statistics on every basketball player or baseball player because that is where his interests lie.

Another mother declared:

I think maybe I bent over backwards to go in the other direction. Where as, people go out and buy their kids computer programs and sign them up for computer camp and everything, we were finger painting and pudding painting and cooking together and doing other things because I want to enrich all parts of him.

One mother whose son was apparently experiencing behavior problems in nursery school sought the assistance of a psychologist because her son's behavior:

... was such that if you said something that he didn't like, you know the little chair that the four year olds sit on would go flying. So the encyclopedia came out, the games for older children, because it suddenly dawned on me that if I challenged him, his behavior would be better, and I learned to realize that if I played a game of cards with him like rummy, his behavior was much better than if I took out a three or four year old game or even something appropriate to his age just like draw colors, forget it, he would just get up in arms not want to do it.

Another mother remarked:

I am not one of those neurotic mothers. I don't make a big deal of it. I don't talk to him about it. I would make sure he understands the information that is fed to him in school. But I would say no, no more than the other average mothers.

This mother was particularly concerned with how her son compared to others in his class and admitted that:

I take it very personally, it would bother me, I have to say this about me. I don't know if the other parents are like me. I am more competitive than he is and I am worried that someone in his class got a 100% where he got the 95%; and I'm wondering if the other parents are measuring him. I don't know that could just be my flaw, a reflection on me.

We can see from the above responses, that the reactions were diversified but all had a commonality in that they accepted their child's giftedness and decided to carefully follow and guide their child's education.

Researchers have found in the past that gifted students may be perfectionists and because of these feelings, they may become frustrated and their internality becomes negative (Kerr, 1990). In order to examine this further I asked, *"How do you feel when you have difficulty understanding a new idea? Something your*

teacher teaches you and you really don't understand it, how does it make you feel?

The boys responses were open and sincere and very informative. Master Red reported, "I feel weird." Master Orange admitted, "It makes me feel a little not smart." Master Gold responded, "I don't know, I feel confused." Master Green affirmed, "Mad." "Mad at who"? I asked. "Myself, frustrated, mad," he clarified. Master White declared, "Well, I get a little frustrated, but then I ask somebody." Master Black echoed, "Sometimes I'm a little disappointed because it may be something simple that I should be able to understand it and sometimes I ask somebody to help me so I can understand it." Both Masters White and Black demonstrated a maturity not evident in the other boys' responses. Although they admitted their frustration, they also knew that they could seek assistance from others.

The following question attempted to elicit responses from the boys as to how they feel when they fail or can not achieve something. *"How do you feel when your teacher calls on you for an answer and you don't know it?"* I asked.

Masters Red and Green both admitted that, "I feel embarrassed." Master Orange responded, "I don't know." Master Purple assured me that, "Well, I wouldn't raise my hand if I didn't know it." Master Gold commented, "If my teacher calls me and I don't know the answer I would feel a little confused on what the answer is; cause everyone is usually saying, I know the answer, I know the answer." Master White admitted that he would feel "Silly" if he did not know the answer, but Master Black seemed to offer a more jovial rejoinder, "I'm like, oh great, hum, hum, hum, next time." Although Master Black's reply sounded

lighthearted, all the boys admitted that they were uneasy and unsettled when they did not know the answer.

When asked whether their gifted sons were more demanding of their time than their children who were not gifted, two responses were "yes," one no. One mother contended that: "He was first and was used to having more time, born after miscarriage and was inquisitive in all areas." Another mother stated: "His perceptions of things are very adultlike, yet he's still a little boy inside so he's in conflict with himself. It takes a lot of finesse to reason and explain things" This last statement certainly supported past researchers (Kerr, 1990).

The responses to the following question were very similar. *"Does your son become frustrated easily when he does not get his way and how do you handle it?"* Mrs. Gold replied: "Yes, don't all children? Usually we try to explain it, and then we say because I'm your mother and that's the way it is." Mrs. White continued:

It depends on what. It's annoying, and like I said before, its really if you had to say, because I said so, you had to go into a like reason about it. Because he understands and unless I justify it to him in a way he understands, it becomes a battle.

Mrs. Purple declared: "Yes!" and maintained that she felt:

Bad, because I'm trying to teach him that we must have patience and understanding and we can't always have everything our own way. And if it's at home I can say to ____ why don't you go chill out in the family room or go upstairs in your bedroom. But when you are in the middle of the mall and you've got people saying, 'look at that child you can't handle him, well I'd give him a spank, well, I something him.' Everybody's always got answers.

Mrs. Red said, "Depends on the day, sometimes I analyze the situation and explain reasoning, and other times I insist this is the way it gotta be." Mrs. Green said he uses a line, 'he wants to have his own life.' I say you can make a decision if you want, but the only decision that matters is your father's or mine."

Mrs. White mused: "How do I handle it, I seethe for a while, I threaten, cajole and he finally does it, he comes through in the end, but not without a lot of frustration." This question supported Roome & Romney's (1985); theory that often these students because of their internality, encounter distress and incertitude.

My second question focused on how much of parent expectations actually affected their offspring. **"Does parental expectations play an important role in academic achievement?"** Because students are basically assessed on their testing skills, the questions asked focused on how they felt they did on tests, how they did in school as a whole and how their parents felt they were doing? The purpose was to discover, *"If you did not do well on a test what might be the reason?"*

All the boys agreed if they did not do well on a test, it would be because they didn't study hard enough. Master Purple agreed with the others but added that "Maybe I didn't try as much as I could have, I could have tried harder." Master Gold responded that, "I think the reason if I don't do good on a test is because I study the wrong things." Furthermore, Master Black felt, "Either maybe because I was being careless and I marked the wrong answers or I meant to mark another."

It can be seen that all the boys exhibited internal locus of control in their assessments of their achievements verifying past researchers' descriptions of the gifted child's profile (Rotter, 1966; Yong, 1992). They took full responsibility for their failures, as well as their successes, in getting into the gifted program.

I continued inquiring further to find how much their parents' attitudes played in their feelings of internality. My next question delved farther into discovering how much these students believed in their successes. In as much as our educational system places emphasis on grades, I was interested in ascertaining whether the importance of grades began at such a young age or whether it was indoctrinated from the parents. I asked the students to explain: *"If you got an A on your last report card, do you expect to get an A on the next one?"*

Master Red answered, "No". I probed further, "Why not?" Master Red responded, "No, I might not, because I might not work as hard as the last one."

Master Orange answered, "Yes, because I'm smart," while Master Purple took a different view, "You shouldn't expect that because you might expect to have a better grade and you might expect to have a worse grade." (I thought this was a very mature response for a youngster in second grade).

Master Gold replied, "I think I might get an A on my next report card. Because if I get an A on my report because I'm good, I think I would be the same the next semester." Master Gold appeared somewhat confused with the question so I offered further clarification. "Do you think you receive the 'A' because you behaved well or because you do well in the subject?" He answered, "I think I'm good in the subject and I'm good in behavior." Master White was confident and exclaimed, "Yes, because if I get it the first time, I can probably get it again."

Master Black mused, "It depends how hard I study. I expect to, because your grades are supposed to go up, not down; but they don't always stay the same, and I could get a B." Master Black appeared to be a very secure young man who expressed himself extremely well orally and was very confident in his responses.

I explored further to find out if they felt their parents attitudes paralleled their own by asking: *"Do your parents always expect you to get the same grades each report card?"* Only two children felt their parents would expect A's consistently. Master Orange answered, "Yes, because I'm smart," and Master Gold confirmed, "Yes, my parents expect me to get A's on every report card." I continued, "OK, but what happens if you didn't?" Master Gold continued, "If I didn't they would be a little sad." "How would you feel?" I added. He responded, "I would feel good if I get a B, because it's the second highest grade."

The other students were definite in their negative responses. Master Red announced, "No way! It's impossible." Master Purple continued, "No, my mom only cares about if I try, if I didn't try she really gets mad, that's the only time she gets mad." Master Green looked at the entire picture, "No, cause in the beginning of the year I usually get bad grades and then I get higher." Master White responded, "No, because if I had a bad one the first time, they expect me to improve, and if I had a good one they expect me to improve a little bit more." (In this answer there is evidence that there appears to be a parallel in how he feels about his work and his perception of how his parents feel about his work.)

Master Black affirmed:

Absolutely not, I had a little talk about that with my mother because I did not exactly like my second report card. They went down a little and in some areas I went up and my mom said she doesn't always expect them to go up; as long as I was trying my hardest that's all that matters to her.

Master Black appeared to have a very open relationship with his mother and, again, he exhibited a very mature and logical reasoning ability.

I wanted to explore further whether their internality was due to rewards and tangible reinforcements. I questioned, "*Do you receive special rewards from your parents when you get a good grade?*" (See Table 1) Masters Red, Orange, and Purple responded, "No." Master Black agreed but added that, sometimes they take me out to ice cream or something nice like that, usually." Conversely, Masters Gold, Green and White received money for their "A's."

TABLE 1

A comparison of the boys with their mothers as they responded to:

MOTHERS	SONS
How do you show your child you are please with his grades?	Do you receive special rewards from your parents when you get good grades.
RED: Tell him I'm proud and he and he was able to do well.	No.
ORANGE: We are happy we really bounce around. We call grandma and grandpa.	Yes, go to Disney, get ice cream.
GOLD: You know it's a given that he's bringing home these good grades. I don't know there is no special reward or anything. It's just great great job, great work.	Yes, I do. Whenever, I get all A's, they give me twenty dollars.
PURPLE: I always give him a hug. I hug him no matter what, but I tell him everyday how proud I am of him.	No.
GREEN: He gets pogs. His grandmother gives him some much[money] a grade.	Money sometimes. parents pay 10 cents a 'B' and 25 cents an 'A'
WHITE: I hang his tests on the refrigerator. I tell his grandmother. I tell him he's wonderful. I tell him I knew you could do it. See what happens when you study.	Yes, money.
BLACK: I ask him if he's happy with himself. Because it's more important for him to feel good about himself.	No, sometimes they take me out to ice cream or something.

In order to obtain a clear representation of their perceptions of how their parents felt about them, I asked, *"Do you think your parents are proud of you?"* All the youngsters agreed that their parents were proud of them. Master Purple pointed out, "Whenever I bring home a test even if its like just, even if it's an A- she's still very proud of me. Even if my sister gets an 87 she's still proud of her." I think it is important to note here that this young man's idea of not doing well was an 87, implicating that his expectations and the expectations of his family were high. The other boys related that their parents showed them how proud they were by praising, hugging, giving treats. Master Red claimed that he knew they were proud of him "because they're my parents."

I continued my questioning of both the students and the parents to find out how much the parents influence affected the students success. The next question posed was, *"Do you think you are doing as well in school as possible or do you think you could do better?"*

There appeared to be a varying degree of explanations to this question. Masters Red, Green contended that he, "Might be able to do better." Master White agreed and admitted, "Well, I'm working hard, but I think I can do better." Furthermore, Master Black claimed, "I'm trying really hard and I'm getting good grades so I'd say you can always do better there is never a limit." Masters Orange, Gold and Purple all affirmed that they were doing as well as possible. Master Purple stated that he "could probably do a little bit better, but I'm still doing pretty good." (Master Purple is a straight A+ student in all academic areas). According to his teacher, when he becomes frustrated, he may exhibit such behaviors as sulking and remuniating over his work.

I explored further to find out whether the boys felt they were doing their best. Masters Red, Orange, Purple, Gold and White claimed that they tried their best all the time. Additionally, Master Black remarked, "Do I try my best all the time? Yea, there's no reason not to." At the opposite pole, Master Green revealed, "No".

In response to the question, "*Do you think your parents expect you to do better?*" Masters Red and Green answered, "No" Master Green explained that, "In the beginning of the year I usually get bad grades and then I get higher." Master Orange gave a definite, "Yes." Master Purple supported his prior response by admitting, "I could probably do a little bit better but I'm still doing pretty good." (Again it should be noted that he received A+ in all academic areas for 2 out of three terms during the school year). Master White was not as definite and offered, "I guess so." Master Black asserted, "They always expect me to do good, they expect me to get good grades and to do better each year." "How do you feel about it?" I continued. "I feel good about it, that means they think highly of me and I like that; I take that as a compliment," he elaborated. In this researchers opinion, a statement such as this, indicated part of Master Black's internality was gleaned from his seeking approval.

Master Black, asserted that his parents expected him to do well and continue to do well. He admitted that he welcomed the compliments that he received from them for his accomplishments

It appears that there is an inconsistency in the responses to the above question. Master Orange believes that his parents feel he could do better, yet according to his teacher, he does receives straight A's. Mrs. Orange admits that she has high

expectations for him; not so much because of his giftedness, but because she contends that everyone should be productive. The internality Master Orange exhibits appears to be motivated to some extent by the desire to please the parent.

I then focused on the mothers and their opinions about their son's work. I asked, *"If your child gets a grade on a test that is below his usual performance, how do you feel about it?"* Mrs. Red affirmed that she would, "Tell him he could have done better if he studied more but he will do better the next time. Not very upset, just tell him he could have done better if he spent more time."

Mrs. Orange admitted:

That's very interesting, I was very mad at myself. I am so used to him getting all hundreds and yesterday he got an A and he got one wrong in his math test and it was still an A, and I was horrible. I rammed him and that was really wrong; that was so wrong of me to ram him for it. He is allowed to get, it was a careless mistake. It had to do with centimeters which is less and he answers it perfect which is more. He said, 'Mom it's no big deal, I still got an A.' And I rammed him and afterwards I felt so bad. What right do I have to ram him. He got one lousy one wrong and I don't accept anything less than 100 % from him and I rammed him and I was really wrong.

Mrs. Purple shared with me that:

He gets very upset and I've learned to have it not upset me. I was finding myself getting upset because he was getting upset. Then I said to him what matters most to Mommy is that you tried and if you study and you didn't do good maybe it's something we don't understand. We'll just have to go over it again, with you and me.

Mrs. Gold declared that although:

He hasn't done poorly. He's a little disappointed in himself when he doesn't do well on the spelling pretests, he's a little disappointed in himself. But he always then aces [his tests], he learns, he knows how to learn but he thinks he should know everything automatically. If he

did poorly, but I felt he was prepared, I would tell him that he tried his best and just keep up. You know that I wasn't disappointed in him. But, if I get he was unprepared that's another story. I feel strongly that a child should be prepared.

Mrs. Green felt that in order to find out why he did not do well, she would, "Ask lots of questions, call the teacher." Mrs. White took the position that, "I feel that its probably his fault, that he could have done it, but he probably didn't spend enough time reviewing the materials" She added that, "He doesn't understand the concept of review. I'm somewhat disappointed because I feel he could do better."

Mrs. Black explained that:

I don't tend to hassle him. I ask him how he felt about it. Grades are really important to him. So if, when he's kinda whipped through a book report, and gotta C+ or B-, he is usually upset with himself and I just said, well, did you learn from that. Cause I don't really want to be on top of him for grades. He's motivated, I kind of assess how he feels about it. We talk about why it happened. Why does he think it happened? Did he try his best as he could? Did he study? And he's usually real honest about it; he knows when he put in the work and when he didn't.

This question revealed a difference between parents and how they felt about their child's failure. Some felt the child could have worked harder while others felt that it was not enough to cause the child to be upset about it, and finally at the extreme, one parent was enraged at less than 100%.

I probed further asking, "*If your child does poorer than usual, what do you do?*" Mrs. Red stated that she would, "Encourage longer studying time and ask him if there is something bothering him." Mrs. Orange confirmed her son's response that he had not performed poorly yet and acquiesced that:

Well, I'm sure I would highly overreact and this is something I'm going to have to work on myself. First, I would decide if he studied or if he didn't study, you know we are not at that point. We are at the point where it is careless mistakes and I can't except mistakes and that's very bad on my part.

Mrs. Purple continued to show her concern over his tendency to become frustrated. She attempted to mollify him by saying, "It's not the end of the world. You're not failing. You know you're still a little boy and I'll love you no matter what and it's fine. Go over it." Mrs. Gold insisted that he just "doesn't do poorly." I probed further, *"If your child receives poor grades, what would you do?"* She responded that, "If he did poorly, but I felt he was prepared? I would tell him that he tried his best and just keep up. You know that I wasn't disappointed in him. But if I felt he was unprepared that's another story. I feel strongly that a child should be prepared."

Mrs. Green, White and Black all offered solutions, "Talk about it. If its something we can restudy, we restudy it. If its not anything we can do than we might just talk about it," replied Mrs. Green. Mrs. White thought it would be effective to "plan out his study habits for the next time." Mrs. Black shared her concerns with her son, "We talk about why it happened. Why does he think it happened? Did he try his best as he could? Did he study or whatever it is? And he's usually real honest about it, he knows when he put in the work and when he didn't."

The following question I believe to be very important in understanding how far the mother's concern will go in order to satisfy the needs of her son or the needs she expects for her son. *"If you feel that your child is not being challenged in*

school what do you do?" Mrs. Red indicated that she would look further into finding out why he wasn't being challenged. Mrs. Orange responded:

That's interesting, I was wondering this year that he was getting 100's in everything and that he was brighter than the other kids in the class. Then I said, have patience, let him enjoy this period in his life. There will be a time where it won't be so easy, there has to be a time. I assume in a place like ----- that they understand about the children. If we were in public [school] there would probably be different problems. I give them a lot of credit here and I will have to bide my time.

Mrs. Gold declared:

I used to worry about that, and now I don't worry about that anymore. I used to feel that it was important that he was being challenged every minute. Now I think it's important that he feel good about himself. If he's doing well, and if he's not complaining things are easy, I think when you are in second grade you're allowed to feel good about yourself.

Mrs. Purple remembered there was a time that she would remain silent when things were not going well for her son, but after receiving encouragement and support from the psychologist she learned how to handle those situations. Mrs. Green indicated that she would just "complain to the teacher and to the administration."

Mrs. White claimed:

Well you know ----- doesn't have the greatest work habits, so I feel the work, not the concepts, but actual execution of the work is a challenge for him. So, I try not to give him too much more than that. Frankly, as a working parent, it is hard for me to do all that.

Mrs. Black recalled:

I have talked to the teacher in the past and said he really needs motivators. Sometimes you know that when he finishes his work, he's got something to do. I mean fortunately ----- an avid reader and he almost always has a book with him, so if he finishes ahead of time he's happy just sitting up and reading.

Generally, the mothers expressed accordant concern for the need to challenge their sons. Mrs. Gold, although she presently was satisfied with the program, did proclaim that if she felt that her son was not challenged, she would intercede. The most prevalent anxiety facing the mothers in the school is the fear that their children will experience "Boredom." The "B" word, as it is commonly referred to, is feared by the members of the faculty, DIG staff, and administration. All efforts are established to furnish the students with enriching curriculum and extraordinary cultural experiences.

One of the four questions this paper addressed was, **"How much does parental concern affect the child's tendency towards individuality and motivation?"**

Researchers have concluded that gifted students are self-motivating and are in control of their environment (Harty, Adkins & Hungate, 1984). In order to find out whether this concept applied to these seven youngsters, I wanted to examine under what circumstances the boys request help from their parents and how their parents felt about requests for assistance. I asked the boys, ***"When do you find the need to ask your parents for help?"*** Master Red answered, "When I have to study and I need help with things that you need two people to work on it."

Master Orange was unsure of the question so I rephrased it. "Do you ever find the need to ask your parent for help with your work?" He responded, "No,".

I continued: "But if you did, how do you think your parents would react?"

Master Orange exclaimed, "Crazy." I remarked: "If you needed help?"

Master Orange insisted, "Because I never ask them to help me."

Master Purple explained:

I always, well sometimes I have to ask them for help, but that's the only time I ever ask them for help is if I need them to test me or if I need a tiny bit of help for homework and I ask mostly help on the homework, just like I ask them to spell something.

Master Gold added, "I ask my parents for help if there is something that I don't understand or something that is really hard." Master Green assured me that his parents, "Explain it to me and they keep explaining it to me until I understand it and then if I need help they just help me."

Masters Black and White felt that they only need help with practicing for spelling re-test or when the work was too difficult for them to tackle by themselves. From the boys responses, they appeared to be independent learners, but were not afraid to ask for help if they needed it, with the exception of Master Orange. Master Orange asseverated that he never needed any help. I wonder if this statement had more to do with his hesitancy to admit that he was not always perfect as he was expected to be. His exclamation that his parents would go "crazy" was an affirmation of this conjecture.

To compare parental answers, I posed the following questions, *"Does your child ever come to you for help with their school work?" "How do you feel about that?"*

Mrs. Red responded, "Yes, fine you help him." Mrs. Orange explained, "A little bit, not too much cause most of it he gets. If he gets a long writing assignment he sometimes.... If he has to write three paragraphs, after the second paragraph he kind of asks me for ideas."

Mrs. Purple replied, "Very rarely, I love it because I want to know what he's doing and help him. His backpack belongs to him, that's his private domain, he does not like me to go in it. I can open it if he's watching me or he brings me stuff to go through it." Mrs. Gold responded: "Occasionally, I think it more because his brother gets a lot of help with his homework and he feels he should get help with his homework." Mrs. Green thought, "It's great, I encourage it." Mrs. White agreed, "Yes! Great! I don't have a problem with it. I don't want to do it, but if he's having trouble finding something, I'll definitely help him."

Mrs. Black asserted:

Occasionally, though he expresses himself verbally very well, he does not have the patience to write out what is so clear to him in his head, so when he has long term writing assignments he has a tendency to come to me more, otherwise he is really independent.

All the mothers appeared to want their sons to work independently, however, they were willing to help them if the need arose. Interestingly, two of the mother's felt that help was needed for writing assignments which often take time and independent thinking. I also noticed that when the students felt they were engaged in a task that they considered uninteresting or non-motivating, they sought assistance more often.

In order to find answers to the last question of this paper, **"Does parental involvement in school functions affect the child's internal locus of control?"** I

addressed the students and inquired, *"If your parents help at your school how often are they there?"* Masters White and Black have mothers who teach at the school. They implied that they were quite happy that they were there. Masters Red, Orange and Gold, were aware that their parents were active in the school on a volunteer basis and seemed to enjoy the idea. Master Red mentioned that his father attended meetings at the school. Mrs. Orange is active in the Parent Teacher Organization and volunteers to teach students about famous artists once a month. Mrs. Gold is an important member of the school board and serves on various committees.

Master Green really was not quite sure and responded, "Sort of sometimes." He did admit that he was happy when she came. Master Purple answered: "No, they don't do that." (Mrs. Purple and Mrs. Green are the only ones who do not actively work or volunteer at the school. Both parents work full time. However, the mother volunteers as a guest reader in the class and helps in any way she can when time permits). In order to corroborate the responses I asked the mothers: *"Are you involved in your child's' school?" "Why is it important?" "How do you think your child feels about your involvement?"*

Mrs. Red confirmed Master Red's response: "Yes, because you like to have an idea of what's going on and see it first hand and also have the children know you are there. His father is in charge of The Learning Resource Committee (LRC) committee."

Mrs. Orange contended:

Yes, because I think it's very important that the parents are involved in the school and I think the teachers like that the parents are involved

in the school. I think its probably helps-----that the teachers know me and I know them. I wouldn't do it if ----- wasn't here and I think it was an integral part and I believe in volunteerism and he loves it. He thinks I'm very important here.

I am unclear as the reasons why Mrs. Orange wants to be involved in the school.

I do know that she believes it will benefit him.

Mrs. Purple declared :

As much as I can be. Well, like whenever I know there is a play, I'll go and I'll called up and offer to send passes out and to be on the phone to other parents. When there is something educational. Last year, Mrs.----- invited me to come to the class and talk about eating healthy. I brought my big pamphlets and books, I always come to school. I love kids and I want the children to know that I love them and I am able to come there for them. He is very proud, he loves it. Sometimes he'll say, 'Oh, I think if you talk South African they will not understand maybe it's not such a good idea if you come.' But then I know deep down in his heart, just by the way he said it, I know him, I know he wants me there.

As mentioned above, Mr. and Mrs. Purple are both working parents with hectic schedules. Mrs. Purple related to me that she tries to come to school as often as possible, however, her work often prevents her from carrying out her wishes.

Mrs. Gold was honest and sincere when she responded, "Yes, over involved! Actually, personally for Master Gold, not very often. I'm just like a regular mom. But, in the school, I live here. I'm on the board, the education committee, the public relations committee.

Mrs. Gold claimed her involvement originated:

Cause I'm, a control freak. I feel like the only way to know what's going on, is to know what's going on. I never was one to listen to rumors and whatnot. I want to find out first hand. And I try to help

the school be the best they can be. I really don't think he cares one way or the other. I think he's happy when he sees me in school. But he doesn't, like if I want to sit down and talk to him about my involvement. He's not very interested.

Mrs. Green's answer agreed with Master Green, "Somewhat, I visit when I can, three or four times a year." Mrs. White admitted that she wanted, "To make sure he is on track. I really think he likes it, I think he likes having me around, he seeks me out a lot, and I think he likes his friends to know that I am a part of the school."

Finally, Mrs. Black explained:

Yes, I work here. I really try to stay out of his business. I try not to see him during the day because he needs to be able to have his own image, independent of me and my position. A lot of times he likes it, and there are times he is frustrated with it [the fact] that his mom works in the school he attends.

It is apparent that there is a variety of personal reasons why the parents were or were not actively involved in school. Their answers were honest and straight to the point. Whatever the motives were, all the mothers shared sincere interest in making sure the school provided extensive opportunities for their sons.

At this point I decided to concentrate on examining the student's and their mother's feelings on the future. I wanted to explore further how far the mother's would pursue their son's education to assure their son's optimum success in the future.

I asked, *"If you had an opportunity to help your child get into a competitive college that he might not get into otherwise, would you help him if you had connections to do so?"*

Mrs. Red and Mrs. Gold responded, "Yes." They did not elaborate nor did they give her reasons why she would considering helping him.

Mrs. Orange abounded:

One hundred percent! He knows I went to Brandeis and I could get him in. We went up for my class reunion. I told him that if he studies hard and does the best he can he can get into Brandeis because of me. I went to show him, not that he would ever go to Harvard and he said listen, 'I'm going to try to go to Harvard; but its no problem I know I could go to Brandeis.'

Duke University seemed to be the school of status and choice for Master Green and Master White. Mrs. Green replied, "Yes, he wants to go to Duke, that's his hearts desire." Mrs. White elaborated after thinking a minute:

That's a good question, I just went through this with my very good friend. Well, I wouldn't want him to fail. I would probably want him to go to a college that offered him what he could be and some. I would not want him to go to a college where he'd kill himself working. I feel that I would rather him be at top of his class at a school that was a good school. Harvard would be wonderful. Frankly, he has aspirations to go to Duke and I told him if he wants to go to Duke he's gonna have to work a lot harder. He figures he is going to get in on an athletic scholarship. The main thing with----- is that as bright as he might be, he's not into working at it. So that is my frustration with him, because he does not work up to his capacity he has. He just thinks he can breeze by. I think it will catch up to him.

I would like to note here that both Master Green and Master White are in third and fourth grade respectively and are thinking about which university they would like to attend. Mrs. Purple and Mrs. Black shared the opposite view. Mrs. Purple expressed:

No, cause I always feel it will come back and hit me in the face or backfire one way or another. He needs to go where he's gonna. To me there is a reason for it, if he didn't make the grade, there is a reason for it.

Mrs. Black conferred:

I don't think so. I don't know if it would benefit him. I think that if he gets in on his own merit, and it's truly what he wants; than I think that, that's great. If he doesn't get in, and there's a reason why that happened, that means that there will be an opportunity somewhere else that would be better for him.

I continued examining how the parents would feel if their child was unsuccessful in his academic attempts for future achievement. I questioned: *"What would happen if he got into the school and could not keep up with the grades?"*

Mrs. Red answered with a practical response, "Tell him it's better to do well in a school that is not as difficult than to struggle."

Mrs. Orange stated at the present time:

I don't think about that. I don't think. More in an older child. In this grade there is nothing to think about. When he was in high school, I could honestly know what he could do, and what he could not do; it's too early.

Mrs. Purple amusingly remarked: "I'd go find out why. You could see me the little mom, driving there to find out why."

Mrs. Gold was positive in her response:

I can't imagine it happening. If he couldn't keep up with the grades and all of a sudden it's a different level of competition in college; I think sometimes that is devastating for a kid to have that competition. I don't know what I would do? I am a very controlling person so I would try and help him in some way. Get advice on study skills, give him advice on how better to be prepared to plot his time, that kind of a thing.

Mrs. Green simply answered, "He'd transfer." Mrs. White was honest and said, "He would probably flunk out. I would be very upset." Mrs. Black thought, "If he was truly overloaded than we would have to look at alternatives, you know, selections for him."

The above question displayed differences of opinion among the mother's. Some hinted at a sense of frustration that they might encounter if they could not assure their sons success and could not control the outcome. I furthered my inquiry by asking the parents a question that would describe their expectations about what the future would mean to them, if their sons could not achieve what they set out do.

"Suppose your child studies to become a teacher, scientist, or doctor and finds it too difficult and fails, how do you think you would you feel?" (See Table 2)

Mrs. Red remarked, "Upset for him and worried for his future and as the breadwinner." Mrs. Orange assured me:

He would be totally crushed. How would I feel? I've had some failure in my life. I would try and help him find somewhere else to be productive. I would really try to help him be productive. I think there are many ways. You gotta make a living. So, if he can't make a living as a scientist, maybe, he can make a living somewhere else professionally. If it were a nonprofessional job I would die.

I was grateful that Mrs. Orange shared these personal thoughts so honestly and openly. Her detailed response indicated that her aspirations for her son's future was directly related to her own personal experiences. As all parents interviewed, she displayed a concern and hoped that he would not encounter disappointments in his life. Mrs. Orange expressed a determination to help her son work towards preventing that happening. Mrs. Purple: "I'd be upset because I know it would upset him. I would ask him, do you want to talk about it and find something else

that interests you. There are other things you can do." Mrs. Gold and Mrs. Green again contended that they would be very surprised if their sons failed. Mrs. White expressed, "I would be happy if he found a profession that would make him happy. If he found out the curriculum was just not for him; I think happiness is more important and I think that leads to success.

Mrs. Black declared:

I think we all do that. I think that when you decide to major in something, you don't know what's its going to be like on the other side of it. When you start working in a field; sometimes when you become a lawyer and you don't like it; so you have to look for a career change. I guess I would just listen to him and try to flush out what it is he really wants to do and try and help him do that.

TABLE 2

A comparison of the boys with their mothers as they responded to:

MOTHERS	SONS
<p>Suppose your child studies to become teacher, scientist, or doctor and finds it too difficult and fails? How do you think you would feel?</p>	<p>Suppose you study to become a teacher, scientist, or doctor, and you fail? How do you think your parents would feel?</p>
<p>RED: Upset for him and worried for his future as the breadwinner.</p>	<p>Sad.</p>
<p>ORANGE: He would be totally crushed. How would I feel? I've had some failure in my life. How would I feel? I would try and help them find somewhere else to be productive. I would really try to help him be productive. I think there are many ways. You got to make a living, so if he can't make a living as a scientist, maybe he can make a living somewhere else professionally. If it were a non-professional job, I would die.</p>	<p>Terrible.</p>
<p>GOLD: If he finds it too difficult, I'd be surprised.</p>	<p>I think they would feel really sad that I didn't get to be what I wanted to be.</p>

PURPLE: I'd be upset because I know it would upset him.

They wouldn't feel very nice, but it isn't very likely I would fail in something because usually I do pretty good.

GREEN: I'd be really upset. I would not anticipate that he'd fail. There would have to be some kind of reason. I hope we don't get to that point.

Mad, I don't know.

WHITE: I would be happy if he found a profession that would make him happy. I think happiness is more important and I think that leads to success.

Angry.

BLACK: I think we all do that. I think when you decide to major in something you don't know what's it's going to be like on the other side of it. When you start working in the field and sometimes when you become a lawyer and you don't like it so you have to look for a career change and I guess I would just listen to him and try to flush out what it is he really wants to do and try and help him to do that.

They wouldn't be upset or anything. They'd just say why don't you something else. But, if I tried to be a scientist, I don't think I'd fail. Because I want to be so bad, I'd just be so determined, I couldn't be able to fail.

I asked next, "*What are your long term expectations for your child?*"

Mrs. Red answered:

I just want him to be a happy well-rounded person and I know he's never gonna be the person on the block with four hundred friends and the big social person because he tends to be more able to do things on his own, I just want him to be comfortable and happy with himself.

Mrs. Gold commented:

Success! I think whatever he chooses to do he will be successful at. He would like to be a urologist like his daddy which would be just fine with me. But, whatever he would want to be: a scientist, mathematician, he would do just fine."

Mrs. Green hoped, "That he choose something that he'll be happy at: a wonderful father, husband, friend and a good brother and good son."

Mrs. White pondered:

I hope he's a veterinarian. He loves animals, he seems to like that so that would be fine with me. Actually, my long term expectations are that he will find himself and develop better study habits. Because that to me is where his problem is, he has the intellect and capacity just doesn't have the motivation.

Mrs. Black shared, "I want him to be happy to have love and give love and be happy and content with who his is, as a person. I think emotionally if he is whole and fulfilled within himself, then whatever he chooses to do in his life will be good for him."

Mrs. Orange honestly offered her feelings:

Well, maybe I'm a bad parent, I've kinda talked him into becoming a doctor because I always felt that the doctors get extra respect. Even though I am highly educated, I didn't get the job I should have because I married and I moved down here. But doctors are very mobile, everyone thinks that doctors are a cut above. Now maybe they will change with health care environment. I don't know but the

doctors some of them are so lousy and everyone has so much respect and I am very concerned that he get respect professionally which is something that my husband and I lost when we kinda changed jobs.

Finally I directed my last question to the boys in hopes of discovering if they had any long term aspirations. *"If your life took a different turn and you couldn't reach your goals, how would you feel?"* Master Red answered, "Terrible." and Master Orange agreed, "I would feel bad." Master Purple conferred: "I would feel pretty upset that I didn't get to do it, but then he added, "but you know, I could still maybe try again if I wanted to, couldn't I?" Master Black admitted, "Disappointed in myself." and then continued, "I'd just take on something new and get at it and then I'd be happy again." Master Green remarked, "Mad" while Master White calmly answered, "I'd feel fine. There's other jobs. I'd like to be a veterinarian." Most of the youngsters admitted that they would be discontented if they could not reach their goals, but three of them acknowledged the fact that there were other choices and options.

After completing all the interviews and transcribing the data from the tape to the computer, I decided that although I was satisfied with most of the answers to my original questions, I wanted to compare the responses from the interviews with the answers the teachers had given on the questionnaire. There were five teachers who filled out the questionnaires, three from the second grade, one from the third and two from the fourth grade. The questionnaire was in the form of a behavior check list that represented the students' behaviors in certain situations. (See appendix F) The teachers were asked to number each question from one to five. Five (very true), four (usually true), three (somewhat true or sometimes true), two (rarely true) and one (not true). The questionnaire was very informative and

supported the research describing characteristics of gifted students conducted in the past. The profile of the gifted child as seen in the review of the literature was confirmed by the agreement from the answers among the teachers

According to the teachers, there were several questions that they gave the same or almost the same score. The following questions are the ones that supported past research (see review of the literature): that gifted students are enthusiastic and express eagerness about their work (Figure 1); they will perform work completely and accurately (Figure 2) and often when encountering obstacles will persevere for awhile before requesting assistance (Figure 3).

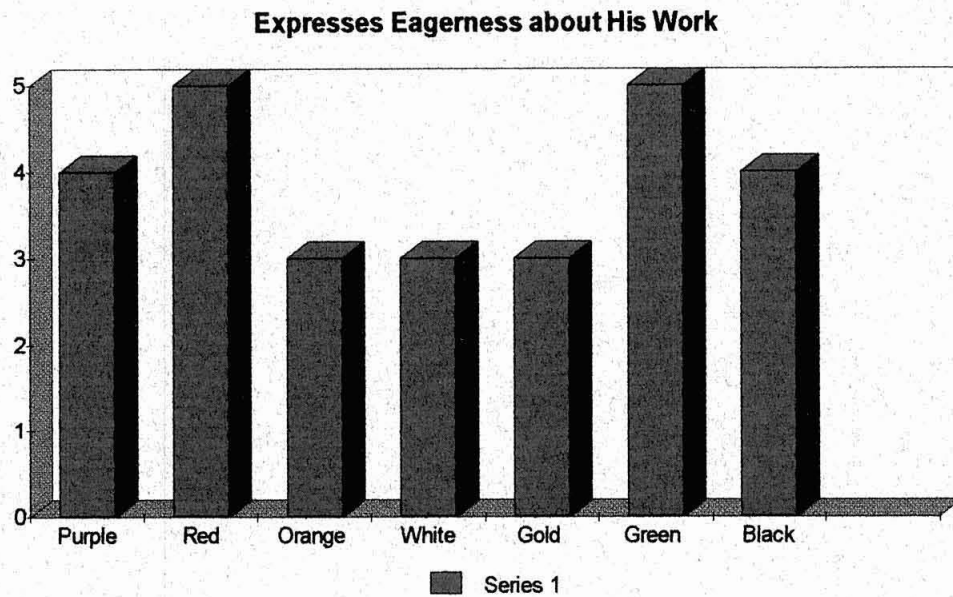
FIGURE 1

Figure 1 represents question #2 on the teacher questionnaire:

EXPRESSES EAGERNESS ABOUT HIS WORK

Masters Red and Green
Masters Purple and Black
Masters Orange, White and Gold

Very True
Usually True
Somewhat or sometimes true

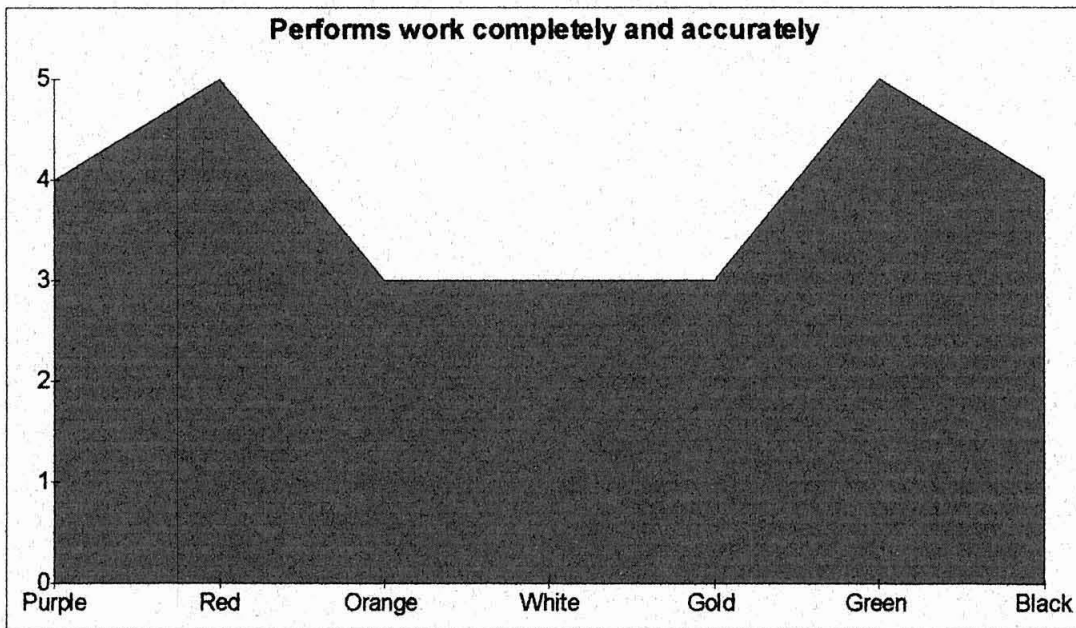
FIGURE 2

Figure 2 represents question #10 on the teacher questionnaire:

FOR THE MOST PART, TRIES TO PERFORM HIS WORK COMPLETELY AND ACCURATELY INSTEAD OF JUST MANAGING TO GET BY.

**Masters Red and Green
Masters Purple and Black
Masters Orange, White and Gold**

**Very True
Usually True
Somewhat or sometimes true**

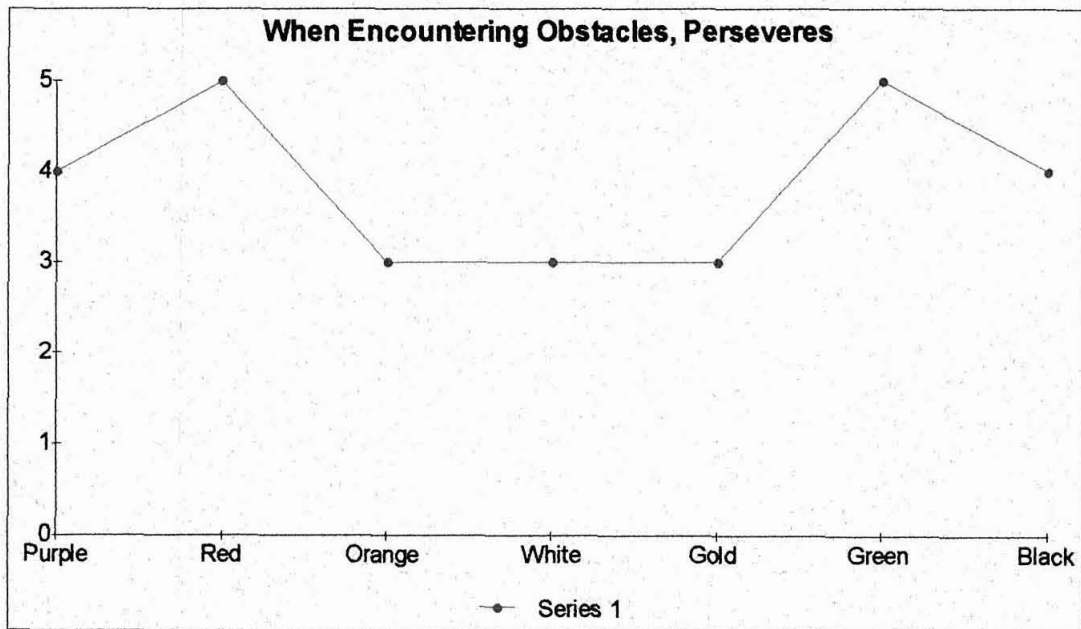
FIGURE 3

Figure 3 represents question #22 on the teacher questionnaire:

When encountering obstacles in his work, perseveres for a while before requesting assistance.

Masters Red and Green
Masters Purple and Black
Masters Orange, Gold and White

Very True
Usually True
Somewhat or sometimes true

The following are examples of the replies from the teachers to the behaviors of the boys in this study.

BEHAVIOR #4 *Does not initiate self-motivating tasks, you need to assist him in beginning and staying on task.* Five answers were not true (#1) and two answers were rarely true (#2). These responses were very close and indicated that these students were generally very motivated and independent workers.

BEHAVIOR #5 *In general he expects to do well on tasks.* They all agreed #5-very true. This question supported strong evidence that these boys were high achievers expecting to succeed in their tasks.

BEHAVIOR #6 *When he fails one part of an assignment, he appears to look upset says he is certain to fail the whole assignment.* Four responses were rarely true (2); 2 were not true (1); and one answered somewhat or sometimes true (3).

BEHAVIOR #9 *Will exhibit characteristics of defeatism when you correct him or find an error in his work.* Four responses were not true (1); two were somewhat true or sometimes true (3) and one was very true (1). It appears that there were variances in the responses to the questions and to the threshold of frustration for each boy.

BEHAVIOR #13 *Selects new and complex problems over simple ones.* Four found it to be usually true (4); one very true (5) and two rarely true (2). Master White was one of the students the teachers answered rarely true. This validates the mother's inclination that he does not work up to his potential and does not take his work as seriously as some of the other subjects in this research project.

BEHAVIOR #14 *Requests assistance from aides, other classmates or yourself on academic assignments more than is essential.* Four answered rarely true (2);

two not true(1) and one somewhat or sometimes true.(3). Again, this question supports that these youngsters are generally independent learners.

BEHAVIOR # 22 *When encountering obstacles in his work, perseveres for a while before requesting assistance.* Six answers were usually true(4) and one was very true (5) indicating that the boys exhibited an ability to take control of their responsibilities and work towards achieving positive results.

I believe the responses from the teachers showed a direct correlation with the interviews of the students and their mothers. The teachers explications offered strong validation of the main core of this research. The interviews were a productive method in reaching conclusions to substantiate the conjecture that parents do play an important role, in the internalization of locus of control. among gifted youngsters.

CHAPTER 5

* CONFIRMATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS *

There are many facets to the results of my study, most expected and anticipated. I will address my findings for each question individually. All responses have included many direct quotes from the answers given by the students and mothers to achieve an authentic representation of the attitudes and opinions.

I believe this study offered great evidence for the initial supposition that parents' attitudes do effect the internal locus of control of their children. However, it must be noted that this study included personal bias due to the relationship of the author with the students, the teachers and parents who were also colleagues. It would be very difficult to replicate this study because of the familiar association of the participants with the researcher.

Due to limited responses from parents requested to participate in the study, the study was restricted to a small number of subjects. The general findings of this study indicated that the boys shared many personal characteristics. In retrospect, I feel the study might have been more informative if half of the subjects were students with average IQ's. A comparison between the two parent groups in addition to the two student groups might have been an interesting area to explore. Moreover, the limitation of one socioeconomic group further limited the scope of this study.

I found all the mothers to be very cooperative and I believe that they responded to the questions as honestly and thoughtfully as possible. They appeared to be as curious about the study as I was about their responses. Moreover, two of the mothers are colleagues of mine, establishing an informal barometer for the interview. However, I did notice in one mother (a colleague), a controlled restraint in some of her responses. Some of her answers I sensed were guarded in the beginning of the interview; as the interview continued, her responses were more open and detailed. I found that the interview conducted in the home was the most relaxed and copious. I am unclear as to the reason. It might have been the comfort of the atmosphere created by a familiar surrounding or it could have been the particular interviewee, herself. Conversely, I found the two interviews held over the telephone to be shorter in length, less detailed and limiting in personal contact. I would not recommend telephone interviews for future studies because they tend to rush the interviewee; face-to face interviews offer the researcher an opportunity to analyze any informative body language that might be exhibited during the questioning.

The first question this study investigated was: **Is the internal locus of control actually owned by the student or is it encouraged and nurtured by the child's desire to please the parents?**

The boys' responses to the questions supported the original assumption that they had an internal locus of control. The teachers verified that the youngsters took responsibility for their successes, as well as their failures. I believe from the boys' responses and their mothers' answers that part of the boys' internality was affected by the attitudes of the mothers, therefore the original hypothesis was

confirmed. All the boys had a strong sense of their giftedness and were clear that they wanted to do well and they wanted their parents to be proud of them. They all enjoyed learning new things and were not afraid to seek support from their teachers, parents or friends if they felt the need. The boys all had high expectations for themselves and did not expect to fail at their academic pursuits. Additionally, they admitted that they knew their parents had high expectations for them, but they did not seem to find this unusual or threatening. Master Gold expressed some confusion when he was asked to answer a question he was not sure about. I am familiar with Master Gold's class and there are often students in it who jump at the chance to offer the correct answers. During the interview, I believe Master Gold was trying to explain to me that because he is in a class with other bright students, often some of these students cannot wait for someone to respond to a question the teacher might ask. If he is asked a question, it might take him a few minutes to think and reply. His response to the question was a clarification as to why he might get confused.

The mothers who participated in this study had a major objective in common, to make sure that the needs of the children were met. Although philosophically they all had similar motives, their approaches were diversified. Some of them took active roles within the school dynamics, while others maintained passive, yet watchful eyes. These parents, although they demonstrated individual motives, certainly voiced an agreement that they expected a learning environment to enrich and enhance their child's formative years of education. These mothers were very careful in their selection of this particular school and maintained an active role

within the school, while encouraging and promoting an open line of communication, to assure their children's best educational interests were attained.

The second question, *Does parental influence play an important role in academic achievement?* was supported by this study. It is important to make sure that parents do not "force-feed talents." Although a child may be gifted in one area that does not mean they are gifted in all areas (Sebring, 1983, p. 98). Sebring continues to say that "parents easily get caught up in expecting straight A's, although the child's strength lies in a verbal talent rather than a mathematical one" "Parents pursue report cards and push the child to do better and better, implying that the grades must be as good as the IQ score suggests (Ibid, p. 98). Master Red reported when he had difficulty grasping a new idea, "I feel weird." I believe he felt that understanding all concepts is not always in his control and this made him feel uncomfortable. Additionally, Mrs. Orange expressed her desire for her son to be productive. She also admitted to having high expectations and found it personally difficult if her son did not achieve what she expected him to do.

The next question focused on: How much does parental concern affect the child's tendency towards individuality and motivation?

According to Sebring, (1983) opposition may occur when the parent's "decisions" differ from what the child desires and the child questions the parent's authority. These challenges may cause enormous dilemmas unless the parents are able to accept the fact that their children are more "independent thinkers than most children and are really analyzing a demand and not just arguing" (p.97).

A few of the mothers shared that at times they were challenged by their sons to explain themselves during certain decision making situations. One mother

expressed that although she would listen to her son's requests, she assured him that the final decision rested with herself and her husband. Mrs. White explained that a full explanation would have to be given to her son or there might be unnecessary conflicts. Mrs. Black was very cognizant of the need to give her son reasons for certain decisions made, but also found it difficult at times to always comply with his requests. All the mothers expressed confidence in their sons' abilities to achieve independently, except for Mrs. White who felt that her son needed extra motivation and continual reminders.

These mothers echoed Swick & Graves (1986) in their accounting of meaningful outcomes for their sons. Swick & Graves, believed that "control implies that individuals are able to carry out a series of actions that empower them to benefit from love and yet help others find meaning of life too," (p.41). Mrs. White supported this statement saying, "I think happiness is more important and I think that leads to success." Mrs. Purple expressed her hope that her son would be "comfortable and happy with himself."

Rimm (1987) offered suggestions for parents to encourage productivity and self-fulfillment in their gifted children. He contended that parents should be consistent in establishing efforts and outcome goals, support school and teachers decisions and demonstrate positive behaviors for children to emulate. Parents should maintain open lines of communication in "problem solving strategies, creative thinking processes and ways of dealing with failure experiences so that children learn the routes to achievement." Children should be encouraged to be independent but should not be given more power than they can manage. Rimm contends that although gifted children are advanced verbally, their

verbal proficiency does not automatically give them "wisdom of maturity," (p.9). These mothers, offered the children opportunities to problem solve on their own but when they were not successful, the mothers interceded trying to eliminate chances for frustration.

Does parental involvement in school policies and functions affect the child's internal locus of control? This was the final question posed at the beginning of this research project. I believe this to be a very important question because parental involvement in the daily life of the gifted child is essential to ensure that a child receives the greatest possible educational opportunities.

"To educate the parent is to educate the child for a life span" (Gordon, 1975.) According to Swick & Graves, (1984) it is important that "parents see the school as supportive of their child and sensitive to their parenting situation. Parents who view the school as related to their priorities tend to participate in the educational process and extend this involvement across the human system," (p. 48).

Furthermore, there often are impractical requests for "social or physical superiority." Parents may coerce a child to participate in community activities or sports teams in order to obtain friendships that will provide consolation to the parent that the gifted child is just like other children. Mrs. Orange supported this statement. She felt that although her son was not strong in athletics it was important for him to participate in baseball whether he wanted to or not. Often parents attempt to "live out their fantasies through the child," those who feel they have not achieved all they can, hope that through their child they will reach fulfillment, (Sebring, 1983, p.98). "Willings (1983) stated that parents may feel their child may be "someone who is going to be a credit to them (p.227). All the

mothers indicated that the boys had at some time announced their desires to enter into a professional field when they grew up. Master White wanted to be a professional athlete. They all expressed high aspirations for the future and were confident that they would achieve success. Mrs. Orange shared her personal feelings and experiences. She expressed a sincere hope that her son would be successful and would not experience the obstacles she did in her career endeavors.

Some parents attempt to satisfy the needs of the gifted student over and beyond what is necessary by generating opportunities for "intellectual stimulation appropriate for their child's level of thinking," (Sebring, 1983, p.99). Mothers engage in searching and seeking out summer and after-school enrichment programs to broaden their child's intellectual horizons. The mother, is frequently the one to attempt to provide everything possible for the gifted child. When adequate provisions cannot always be met, it is the mother who "assumes the role of a martyr, sacrificing everything for the welfare of her gifted child," When the child is made aware of the sacrifices, then the child may obtain feelings of guilt, (Ibid, p.99). None of the boys appeared to exhibit guilt, however, a few of the mothers did affirm that they would intercede to help their child get into a better college if they could (see chapter 4).

Often when parents give siblings more attention than the gifted child, it is a way of "trying to apologize to their average children for the inability to provide them with the same genetic endowment which the gifted child got" (Sebring, 1983, p.99). Although, Mrs. Gold, Mrs. Red, and Mrs. Purple's had other children who were not documented gifted, their responses did not support this statement nor did it appear to be a factor in their families situations.

According to Cornell & Grossberg, (1987) "It is not what parents do with their children, but how they do it, which is most important to the child's personality adjustment. It is important for the gifted child to truly believe that the parent will support them even if they fail," (p.64). I believe a feeling of confidence and love is the true "gift" that parents can give their children. Wargo (1991) created a plan to shift locus of control a student's behavior to the student through: "critical thinking skills, problem-solving/shared decision making; self-awareness, self-esteem; planning, goal setting and learn to learn skills," (p.20).

This may reveal the speculative idea that locus of control does not directly effect behavior but must be interpolated with other personal characteristics, reinforcement values and individual circumstances (Rotter, 1975).

This researcher has had numerous personal experiences with gifted children as a teacher and as a parent. This researcher contends that gifted children are notably complex. I feel they are diverse in their talents, as well as a uniqueness in their individual emotions, self-perceptions and social abilities and are interrelated with the individual's locus of control. They differ from their peers in how they view themselves and how they perceive the world around them. Lovecky (1992) asserts that the gifted are vulnerable and this openness can lead to self-awareness" and "self-actualization." However, Lovecky maintains that although these traits are part of their giftedness, other factors might come into play altering the outcome. The factors included are "psychological and physiological" along with "tolerance for ambiguity, age, degree of introversion/extroversion, preference for types and levels of sensory input, locus of control, etc." (p.18). All the factors add up to the

notion that the gifted child needs to be treated as a whole entity. Locus of control is an integral component of this entity and should be treated as part of the entity. All the exhibited different personalities. Masters Red and Orange were more reserved possibly because they were not as familiar with the researcher as the other boys. It is possible that Masters White and Black were more verbal in their responses due to their age (almost two years older than the other boys) and the familiarity with the researcher who had worked with them in the DIG program.

Because gifted students often internalize their feelings, they are often faced with apprehension and pressures. Past studies have examined how stress may impede their development (Clemens & Mullis, 1981, p.5). Master Green stated that when he had difficulty understanding a new idea he became upset and that got him, "Mad, [at] myself, frustrated mad." Clemens and Mullis further stated that those individuals who felt they had control over their situations were able to cope with stress better than those who externalized (p.15).

Past research has shown that around the fourth or fifth grade, "a tendency to underachieve or even to not achieve emerges through a counter-productive learned reaction to inadequate curriculum and emphasis on conformity," (Blackburn, & Erickson, 1986, p.553). Gifted students who exhibit underachieving tendencies are often "lacking a sense of internal control and personal power," (Blackburn & Erickson, p.553). Mrs. White was one parent who expressed concern that her fourth grade son was unmotivated and more interested in non-academic pursuits. Although she was concerned with his laissez-faire attitude, because she was in the educational field, she was sensitive to the notion that if she pushed him he would

rebel and the outcome would be counterproductive. Therefore, through positive interaction and reinforcement she set guidelines for effective parental management.

According to Cheyney (1962) a prescription for a sound operating family encourages:

- 1). Work as a unified force to solve problems.
- 2). Respect and encourage each family member's goals.
- 3). Keep lines of communication open.

Mrs. Black was very determined to create a relationship with Master Black that would foster an open and honest connection; while encouraging independence and ensuring parental guidance. One idea that fosters parental involvement has been the use of reading materials (Colangelo & Duttman, 1983, p.21). Cheyney (1962) found that parents primarily used books to foster their child's abilities, the reading environment at home was seen as essential. Mrs. Gold introduced computers and a variety of software programs to enrich and stimulate Master Gold when he was wheelchair bound due to a ski accident. Mrs. Purple realized that she needed to give him learning materials and games that were more advanced for his age in order to stimulate him. She hoped to avoid inappropriate behaviors that she believed were caused by lack of intellectual stimulation. The researchers also advocated family trips, discussion of books, encouragement of hobbies and interests and guiding appropriate television viewing. Researchers found that when parents participated in programs endorsed by the school, their presence's had a positive effect in their children's academic achievement, (Ibid, p.233).

Additionally, when parents attempted to enhance their home environments, the child's achievement increased, and long term effects would be established,

(Brofenbrenner's, 1975). All the parents clearly made attempts to offer a home environment that would broaden their sons' intellectual opportunities

According to Silverman (1992) "The key to raising gifted children is respect: respect for their uniqueness, respect for their opinions and ideas, respect for their dreams," (p.3). This researcher believes that although the mothers have different approaches and practices in child rearing, they all respect their son's individuality and hope they their sons would grow up happy and healthy.

To quote Dorothy Canfield Fisher, "A mother is not a person to lean on but a person to make learning unnecessary." James Baldwin conferred, "Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them (Simpson's Contemporary Quotations, 1988). Parents are the guides for their children leading them in the direction they are going, it is essential that the direction they take be a rewarding one. The nineties have brought many concerns and uncertainties about the future education of our youth. Families and educational institutions, private or public, must work together to ensure the maximum opportunities for the future generations of our country.

I would welcome an opportunity to perform follow up interviews with these families every five years for the next 20 years. I would be interested in investigating if the internal locus of control the boys exhibited, will or will not be evident. I believe that future studies may be helpful in providing opportunities to examine different stages in the boys' academic growth and how these stages relate to the influences from the mothers. Future analysis is necessary to discover whether there will be a consistency to the boys present profiles.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

* FUTURE GOALS *

I would have welcomed the opportunity to interview the fathers and the siblings, however, due to numerous circumstances that was not possible.

Although it was not mentioned in the preceding chapters, it was evident during the interviews with the boys and their mothers, that the role of the grandparents and their effect on today's children have profound importance. As grandparents live longer, their relationships with the grandchildren are more intense and involved. It would be an interesting study to investigate the effects of grandparents on children's internal locus of control.

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents:

I am writing to ask you to participate in my research or my master's thesis in Varying Exceptionalities at Lynn University. The study that I have undertaken concerns itself with parental attitudes and their effects on the Locus of Control among gifted students.

I would like to interview you concerning your ideas and/or feelings on this subjects. The information that you provide will be kept in strict confidence and no person will be identified by name. With your permission, I would like to tape record the interview, which will take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

I will be contacting you in the near future so that we may arrange an appointment to suit your availability. I appreciate your time and effort on my behalf.

Sincerely Yours,

Joan G. Levit

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW

I agree to be interviewed by Joan G. Levit, Master of Education candidate, Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida, as part of her master's thesis study Parental Attitudes and their Effects on the Locus of Control Among Gifted Students.

I am aware that confidentiality will be maintained and that no participant will be identified by name in any write-up or publication.

I give Joan G. Levit the right to use direct quotes from my interview in her write-up or publication of this study.

I understand that any interpretive findings will be made available to me for any comments that I may have as part of a member check at the end of the study.

I understand that I am receiving no reimbursement for participating in this study. I give my permission for my interview to be tape recorded.

I give my permission for all answers to the questionnaires to be used in the study.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

Dear Parents:

I am writing this letter to introduce myself to you. My name is Joan G. Levit and I am a master's candidate at Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida.

I am presently doing research and writing my master's thesis on Parental Attitudes and their Effects on Locus of Control Among Gifted Students. I am currently teaching second grade at _____ and I am working with the DIG program as a teacher as well as mentoring the fourth grade DIG students.

In order to complete my study, I must conduct interviews with the students and have them complete two questionnaires pertaining to the topic. The school, class, children, and parent names will not be mentioned in the study. All information acquired through interviews and questionnaires will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for permitting me to work with your child. It is my hope that many positive outcomes will develop from this study.

Sincerely Yours,

Joan G. Levit

Please return this form to Mrs. Kamber, Mrs. Nadler or myself before January 15, 1996.

_____ Yes, my child can participate in the study.

_____ No, I do not want my child in the study.

Child's Name

Parent/Guardian's Name

APPENDIX D**STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE**

All the following questions will be modified to fit each particular interview situation.

1. Why do you think you became part of the gifted program?
2. How do you feel when you study really hard for a test and you do well?
 - a. How long does it take you to study for a test?
 - b. Which subjects take the longest?
3. If you do not do well on a test, what do you think might be the reason?
4. When you have difficulty understanding a question in class, what do you do about it?
 - a. How do you think that teacher might help you?
5. If you read a story and find that you have difficulty remembering the details, why do you think this happens?
6. Do you think your parents are proud of you?
 - a. How do you know?
7. Do you like to get help from others?
 - a. If you do, who do you like to get help from?
 - b. Does this help you do better in school?
8. When do you find the need to ask your parents for help with your work?

- a. How do they react to your request for help?
- b. How do they help you?
- 9. Have you ever met anyone who thinks that you are so smart that you should get everything right all the time?
 - a. How do you feel when you don't?
- 10. In which subjects do you find learning new material easy for you?
 - a. In which subjects do you have difficulty?
 - b. How do you feel when you have difficulty understanding a new idea?
- 11. If you get home at night and find that you did not remember what the teacher said to do for homework or what to study for on a test, what do you do?
- 12. If you got an A on your last report card, do you expect to get an A on the next one?
 - a. Why or why not?
- 13. Do your parents always expect you to get the same grades each report card?
 - a. Why or why not?
- 14. Do you receive special rewards from your parents when you get a good grade?
 - a. If so, what are they?
 - b. What did you do to earn those rewards?
- 15. Describe some of the reactions you receive from your parents after they read your report card.
- 16. When you raise your hand in class are you always sure of the answer?
 - a. How do you feel when your calls on you for an answer and you do not

know it?

17. Suppose you weren't sure about the answer to a question your teacher asked you, but your answer turned out to be right, how do you feel about that?
 - a. Why do you think this occurred?
18. When you read a story how much of it do you usually remember?
19. Has there ever been a time when you did something silly?
 - a. How did your parents react?
20. Do you think you are doing as well in school as possible or do you think you could do better?
21. Do you think your parent's expect you to do better?
 - a. How do you feel about that?
22. How do you think your parents feel about your work in school?
23. If your parents help at your school, how often are they there?
 - a. Do you like when they help?
 - b. How does it make you feel?
24. Have your parents ever promised to come to a school function or sports game and could not come for an important reason?
 - a. How did you feel?
 - b. Did you discuss your feelings with your parents about the situation?
25. Do you try to do your best all the time?
26. Suppose you study to become a teacher, scientist, or doctor, and you fail, how do you think your parents would feel?
27. What do you hope to accomplish in life?
 - a. If your life took a different turn and you could not reach your goals, how would you feel?

APPENDIX E**PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. How many children are in your family?
 - a. What place in chronological order is ____
 - b. Do you have other members of the family who are documented gifted?
2. If there are any children in the family who are not gifted, has there been a problem with any conflict because of it?
 - a. Have you found the gifted child more demanding of your time?
 - b. In what way, describe?
3. How old was your child when you noticed that he displayed characteristics of a gifted child?
 - a. Please, describe these characteristics?
 - b. How did you feel about this at the time?
 - c. How do you feel about this now?
4. How did you treat them when you found that he was gifted?
 - a. How did you know they were gifted?
 - b. Did you anything to encourage this?
5. When your child was young did he prefer to play by himself, with you, other siblings or friends?

6. At what age did your child begin school?
 - a. How many schools did you research before making a decision for placement?
 - b. Were you happy with your decision?
7. Does your child become frustrated easily when he does not get his way?
 - a. How does this make you feel?
 - b. How do you handle it?
8. How do you feel your child is doing in school?
9. Do you think your child is a leader or do you think he follows his friends?
 - a. Why attributes does he have to make him a leader?
10. Are you involved in your child's school?
 - a. In what capacity and how often?
 - b. Why are you involved?
11. How do you think your child feels about your involvement in school?
12. What is your opinion about homework?
 - a. What are your family's policies concerning homework and studying?
13. Does your child ever come to you for help with their school work?
 - a. How do you feel about that?
14. If your child gets a grade on a test that is below his usual performance, how do you feel about it?
 - a. How do you react?
15. When your child does poorly, does his mood change?
 - a. Are you able to tell that there might be something troubling him?
16. If your child does poorer than usual, what do you do?

17. If your child receives a poor grades, what would you do?
18. How do you show your child that you are pleased with his grades?
19. If you feel that your child is not being challenged in school what do you do?
20. How do you feel when he acts silly?
21. We all have high expectations for our children. Do you think that of your child fails it is a reflection on you as a parent?
22. Have you ever promised to come to a school function or sports game and could not come for an important reason?
 - a. How do you think your child felt?
 - b. Did you discuss the incident?
23. If you had an opportunity to help your child get into a competitive college that he might not get into, would you help him?
 - a. Would you help him if you had connections to do so?
24. What would happen if he got into the school and could not keep up with the grades?
25. Suppose your child studies to become a teacher, scientist, or doctor and finds it too difficult and fails, how do you think you would you feel?
26. What are your long term expectations for your child?

APPENDIX F

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TEACHERS ON INTERNAL
LOCUS OF CONTROL IN THEIR STUDENTS

This is an adaptation of the student behavior checklist implemented by Fincham, Hokoda & Sanders Jr. 1989. p. 144). Some of the questions have been changed to apply to the present study.

Below you will find questions that represent some student's behavior in school. Please reflect on the behavior of the child named above during the last 2-3 months. For each question, place the appropriate number in the space to the left of the question that best describes the child. Each number represents the following:

1	2	3	4	5
not true	rarely true	somewhat or sometimes true	usually true	very true

Please read the items carefully, as they pertain to specific behavioral characteristics of the individual student:

- ___ 1. Chooses to try simple problems rather than difficult ones.
- ___ 2. Expresses eagerness about his/her work.
- ___ 3. When he faces stop gaps in his work, he works to overcome them.
- ___ 4. Does not initiate self-motivating actions towards tasks, you need to assist him in beginning and staying with task.
- ___ 5. In general, he expects to do well on tasks (instead of assuming failure and declaring amazement with each accomplishment).
- ___ 6. When he fails one part of an assignment, he appears looks upset, says he is certain to fail the whole assignment.

- ___ 7. Tries to finish tasks, even when they are arduous.
- ___ 8. Makes negative or abject comments about his ability when he performs badly.
- ___ 9. Exhibits characteristics of defeatism when you correct him or find an error in his work.
- ___ 10. For the most part, tries to perform his work completely and accurately, instead of just managing to get by.
- ___ 11. If asked why he earned a poor grade, he is apt to promise to do better or say something about trying harder (e.g., "I didn't concentrate enough that time").
- ___ 12. "After failing a few problems on an academic task, he continues to do poorly on remaining problems even though they are within his ability range."
- ___ 13. Selects new and complex problems over simple ones.
- ___ 14. Requests assistance from aides, other classmates, or yourself on academic assignments more than is essential.
- ___ 15. When you indicate an error has been made he "takes it in stride, tries to correct the error, and continues to work."
- ___ 16. Can observe that he is self-satisfied when he obtains a good grade or when his performance is commended.
- ___ 17. When he begins tedious task, his effort is "half-hearted".
- ___ 18. Does not answer with eagerness and self-satisfaction when asked how he is working on an academic assignment.

- ___ 19. When he does poorly on one section of an assignment, he anticipates doing a good job the remainder of the assignment.
- ___ 20. Expresses remarks like "I can't do it" when he has difficulty with his task.
- ___ 21. When he receives a good grade, he does not believe he is capable enough to succeed in that subject-area and remarks. For example, that you were being kind, the task was simple, or he was "lucky."
- ___ 22. When encountering obstacles in his work, perseveres for a while before requesting assistance.
- ___ 23. When he faces difficulty in classwork, he becomes distraught and ceases any attempt to continue. He is readily disconcerted.
- ___ 24. When he obtains a low grade, he assures me that he will strive to do better in the subject the future.
- ___ 25. If you tell him that "Your work is fine" does he believe that is something you just said or does he really believe you meant it?.

Please:

NOTE-LEARNED HELPLESSNESS ITEMS -1,4,6,8,9,12,14,17,18,20,21,23,
MASTERY-ORIENTED ITEMS- 2,3,4,7,10,11,13,15,16,19,22,24

1. Faking is not only possible but probable.
2. Forced choice items such as always, never, seldom, frequently, and always are often subject to individual response biases.

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